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JOHN, VISCOUNT MORLEY

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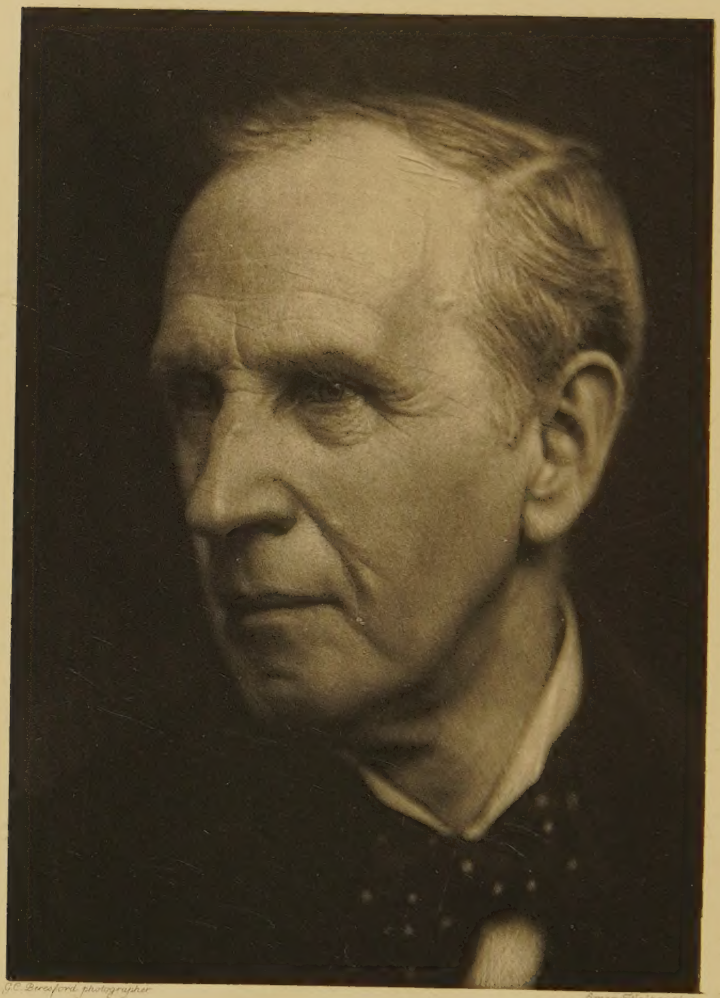

Viscount Morley of Blackburn O.M.

JOHN, VISCOUNT MORLEY

AN APPRECIATION AND SOME REMINISCENCES

BY JOHN H. MORGAN

"The nobler a soul is, the more objects of compassion it hath."

WITH PHOTOGRAVURE FRONTISPIECE

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
1924

DA 565
.M78M6
Copy 1

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY

TO

THOMAS HARDY,

O.M.

PREFACE

A WORD as to the origin and purpose of the following pages. Three out of the four chapters dealing exclusively with Lord Morley's published works were written, and duly appeared in periodicals, in his own lifetime. They were fortunate in winning from him words of commendation, and he at one time expressed a desire for their republication. One of them (Chapter VII.) was, indeed, as is explained on page 62, to have been the starting-point in a common literary venture of his and mine. So much may be said by way of excuse, if excuse be needed, for their republication in the present book.

The three chapters of reminiscences stand on a different footing. They were written and, in the case of two of them, published some months after Lord Morley's death, and would probably never have been written at all, had I not been impressed by the one-sided and partial character of the many "appreciations" written by others after that mournful event. And by partial I mean either idolatrous* or iconoclastic. Untempered

* I except the felicitous study by Mr. Birrell which appeared in the pages of the *Empire Review*, a study by an intimate friend which maintained an admirable equipoise of judgment.

eulogy was followed, as was perhaps inevitable, by intemperate blame. There has been too much of both. It seemed to me that the time had arrived for one who had the privilege of belonging to the inner circle of his friends to try to hold the balance even between the two extremes, and to attempt to show him as he really was. Some of those who knew him best are good enough to think I have succeeded. His nephew and executor, Mr. Guy Morley, has written to me, with a kindness of which I am only too sensible, to say that the result is " a most just and friendly portrait " of the original. If I had had any doubts, and I have had none, as to the propriety of these two chapters, his words would be with me, for obvious reasons, decisive.

With Lord Morley's private life I have not dealt at all. Had I done so, I could, as I have said in the pages that follow, have told a tale of singular devotion, a tale of one whose whole life was a noble comment on the text, " Bear ye one another's burdens," and who, living, fulfilled the law of Christ. But this is an appreciation, not a biography. It is, however, an appreciation suffused with personal reminiscence. " Oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy," and there may be some who will be glad to have these recollections before the memory of him who recollects has begun to fade. I have followed Lord Morley's own practice in the obituary essay he wrote upon his friend and master, John Stuart Mill, and in his " Life " of Gladstone—namely that of reproducing conversations with the subject of my discourse, for it is in

a man's conversation, as in his work, that, in the words of Ruskin, you find him to the uttermost or not at all. These conversations are merely a selection, and in making it I have excluded all purely personal talk, except in so far as it was concerned with and illuminated the public actions of public men. I have also published a portion—it is but a small portion—of the many letters he addressed to me. I might easily have published more, but the solicitude, in my own regard, of some, and the intimacy of others, are such as to preclude me.

The first chapter is here printed for the first time. The second and third chapters have already appeared in the pages of the *Quarterly Review*. They have, however, undergone some revision and considerable expansion, the latter the harvest of further research in the writer's diaries and correspondence.

In these chapters (II. and III.), as also in the hitherto unpublished chapter with which this book opens, I have gone much more fully than was possible within the compass of a *Quarterly* article into the question of Lord Morley's attitude towards the War, the causes which provoked it, and the policy which preceded it. And I have seen reason to qualify to some extent what I wrote in the issue of the *Quarterly* for January last. What I there wrote was considerably influenced by a certain story, which I published on the authority of Lord Haldane from whom I had just heard it, as to a passage of arms between him and Lord Morley on the subject of the proceedings of the Committee of Imperial

Defence. My article was written under considerable pressure within a period of twenty-four hours, just as the *Quarterly* was going to press, and I had not then the leisure, which I have subsequently enjoyed, of going through all my records of conversation with Lord Morley on the subject, while the remarkable letter now published in Chapter I. and other letters were not then before me. And in view of all this, I am unable to accept Lord Haldane's view that Lord Morley's attitude is to be explained away as that of a querulous old man with a failing memory. His memory, like all his faculties except his hearing, was, indeed, extraordinarily good during the period in which he both wrote and spoke to me on this subject, in other words during the years 1914–1920; it was only in the last two or three years that it began to fail. The conclusion I have come to is that there is a great deal more to be said for Lord Morley's position than is commonly supposed.

So much will be apparent in the first three chapters of the present book. Lord Morley, as I have there pointed out, felt very keenly on the subject, and spoke very strongly of the way in which he had been, as he considered, misled by certain of his colleagues. This inevitably raised personal issues, and, in view of the fact that nearly all Lord Morley's colleagues have been, or are, busy in publishing to the world their own pleas of justification and, hastily anticipating the appearance of the devil's advocate whom only posterity can brief, entering judgment for themselves on the ground of posterity's non-appearance, I do not think they can

reasonably complain if they are not allowed in this book to have things all their own way. Until recent years it was the invariable custom, and a very salutary one, for statesmen not to publish their memoirs in regard to great affairs of state in which they had been engaged, but to leave the task to their literary executors; but all that has been changed. Their critics are proportionately emancipated. I do not, indeed, associate myself with all that Lord Morley said and wrote to me in criticism of his colleagues, particularly Lord Haldane, neither do I dissociate myself from it. But the reader can form his own judgment. It is possible to sympathize with, and indeed largely to share, Lord Morley's feelings, and yet to feel, unlike him, that the clamour for Lord Haldane's resignation in 1915 (to take but one example) was a foolish and unprofitable thing. I entered the lists on Lord Haldane's behalf in days, namely in 1915, when it was exceedingly unfashionable, and indeed unpopular, to do anything of the kind, and to what I then wrote * I adhere. But I feel I owe it to Lord Morley's memory, in view of all that has been published, to make his position clear. He had spoken to me at one time of confiding to me for publication the secret memoir to which I have alluded in this book, but, wearying of the controversy, he eventually decided not to publish it at all. I have nowhere quoted it, paraphrased it, or disclosed its contents. I have confined myself to

* The curious reader, if such there be, will find it in the *Daily News*, the *Westminster Gazette*, and other leading journals under date July 13, 1915.

bringing out, as characteristic of the man, his mental attitude to the situation in 1914, leaving the *pièces justificatives* entirely on one side. He certainly does not lose in the process. Lord Morley was not only one of the noblest men I have ever known, or am likely to know, but the most truthful, and he had an apprehension which pierced like a sword. In a word, the more one examines the records of these things, the greater does he appear.

The chapter on the " Collected Works " appeared originally as the leading article in the issue of the *Times Literary Supplement* for February 10, 1921 ; the chapter on the *Recollections*, with the exception of the opening paragraph, which is of course new, and on *Politics and History*, appeared in the pages of the *Nineteenth Century* for January 1918, and March 1914 respectively. To the editors and proprietors of these journals I have to express my thanks for permission to republish. The fifth chapter, dealing with the biographies of Gladstone and Cobden, is new.

I am indebted to Mr. Austen Chamberlain for some interesting particulars of the life-long friendship between Lord Morley and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. I have to thank Lord Fitzmaurice and Mr. Francis Stopford for kindly reading my proofs and giving me the benefit of their advice on several points. To Mr. John Murray's discriminating sagacity I am under many obligations.

J. H. M.

LONDON,
July 1, 1924.

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JOHN, VISCOUNT MORLEY

CHAPTER I

THE THINKER IN POLITICS

A MAN'S face is the truest of biographies, and Life is at work upon it till the end. To look at Lord Morley's features in his old age was to read therein the story of a life of singular purity, in which the desires of the flesh had played little part—a life chaste, meditative and almost ascetic in its pursuit of Truth. He was small in stature and even frail in physique, but nature had given him a noble head. The face was long, narrow at the base, wide at the brow, with that fullness at the temples which is always the mark of intellectual distinction. The nose was large and slightly aquiline, the lips thin to severity, but capable of a most engaging smile, the eyes deep-set and of a bluish-grey like cooling steel as though hidden fires lurked within them. The eyebrows could be eloquent. In earlier years his face had a combative, almost disputatious expression, completely masking his innate kindness of heart, but as he grew older, Time, the most cunning of all sculptors, refined upon the original, the harsh traits were effaced, a certain suavity of line appeared, and the result was one

of the most finely-chiselled faces of his age and generation.

To know him was an intellectual discipline. It was not merely that he had read widely in all literature, ancient and modern, pagan and divine, but that he had thought deeply and had trained his mind as an athlete trains his muscles until he seemed to be always in the pink of intellectual condition. Some of his earlier writings, which are not as well known to-day as they should be, notably the essays on " Popular Culture " and on " The Study of Literature," are a kind of manual of mental exercises, as vigorous in their discipline for the mind as anything that was ever prescribed for the development of the body. Slovenliness of thought was as intolerable to him as would be flabbiness of body to an instructor in physical training ; superficiality of conviction was almost as immoral as hypocrisy. *What* do you believe ? *Why* do you believe it ? Is your belief founded on conviction, complaisance, neighbourliness, or mere indolence ? Such is the disturbing catechism that greets one on every page of the famous essay on Compromise, which was indeed a trenchant plea for No Compromise in every sphere of human thought and social behaviour, so unaccommodating that the exhortation " Always tell the truth to your wife " would hardly be a parody, vulgar though it sounds. Many a man must have gone away sorrowful after reading that inexorable little book, wondering whether he was not a hypocrite. To understand its intellectual ruthlessness, one must remember that it was the work of a rationalist

who had been all his life under arms against dogmatic theology, of a Liberal who had been fighting the battle of Nonconformity, of an educationist who had been the advocate of secular education, of a secularist who had joined issue over the abolition of University tests, of a disciple of that great Utilitarian who had attacked the Intuitionist philosophy because it taught men to take certain things on trust instead of examining them for themselves. In all these things he was a disciple of Mill—" the wisest and most virtuous man I have ever known," he once wrote, " or am likely to know." Mill was his intellectual godfather, and no estimate of Lord Morley can omit to take that affiliation into account, but I will not pursue it here. It is enough to say that Lord Morley educated himself in a rigorous school. No man ever read to greater purpose. For reading " by deputy " he had, like Bacon, nothing but contempt. " Always read with a pen in your hand " was one of his counsels, because " nobody can be sure that he has got clear ideas on the subject of his reading unless he has tried to put down what he conceives the writer to have meant in independent words of his own." Examine yourself before you read, and examine yourself after you have read—" it will not do to deal with ideas that we find in books or elsewhere as a certain bird does with its eggs—leave them in the sand for the sun to hatch and chance to rear ; people who follow this plan possess nothing better than ideas half-hatched and convictions reared by accident." Suckle your own

ideas, he seems to say, don't put them out to nurse. Many such aphorisms are scattered over his writings, and some of them are hard sayings, as hard as anything in Milton's *Areopagitica*. But originality of mind and suppleness of intellect only come by prayer and fasting. A thinker is not made in the twinkling of an eye. Morley's tremendous intellectual ascendancy was the reward of a long novitiate and severe self-discipline. The result was a dialectician as superb in mental sword-play as any *maître d'armes* with the foils, a maker of phrases who was their master not their dupe, an intellect so keen that to encounter it you had to prepare yourself like a boxer who enters the ring, and even then you could not be sure of not getting a knock-out in the first round. When Dr. Johnson was ill, someone mentioned the name of Burke as a friend he might like to see : " No, no," cried the sick man, " that fellow calls forth all my powers ; were I to see him now, it would kill me." Morley, in his way, though less masterful, was not less formidable.

But Lord Morley was more than an intellectual athlete, and much more than a disciple of Mill. Mill exercised an immense influence on the thought of his generation, but he never captivated its imagination. He was too arid for that. He was logician, metaphysician, political economist, and a student of the dry husks of political science. And he was nothing more. To adopt a metaphor of Morley's, used in quite another connection, he was always chasing Truth with a logical forceps. In the House of Commons, such a man was but a transient

and embarrassed phantom, not inaptly described by Disraeli, on his first appearance, as "a political finishing governess." But Morley both captured the eye of the reading public and won the ear of the listening House. The reason is not far to seek. Unlike Mill, he had a passion for literature, and an instinct for life. Nothing illustrates the difference between the two men better than their discussion as to the merits of Victor Hugo—Morley enthusiastically praising the poet's "mighty line," and his imaginative splendour, and Mill replying by objecting that the author of *Les Miserables* had not advanced one single constructive remedy for the social evils which had been the object of his magnificent compassion. To which Morley dryly answered that it was not the duty of a poet to formulate a political programme. Mill, moreover, took himself with dreadful seriousness and deliberately avoided the society of his fellows—if, indeed, he were prepared to admit that any man was his fellow—on the somewhat pretentious ground that "persons of any mental superiority who greatly frequent society are greatly deteriorated by it." But Morley, eclectic though he was in his friendships, and shy by temperament, loved the colloquial life and the intimacies of human intercourse. He sought, deliberately enough, to correct the shortcomings of the life of reflection by a life of action. No man was ever more alive to Goethe's aphorism—

> "Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,
> Sich ein Charakter in dem Strom der Welt."

The result was the happy union of a scholar

without pedantry, and a politician without commonplace. What he read enriched what he spoke; what he experienced enlivened what he wrote. And if it be true that, as the great Puritan has said, to be a true poet a man's life must first be a poem, it is not less true that to write a "Life" the writer must first have lived—he must, in the words of the Scriptures' seek to have life and to have it more abundantly. Morley had been barrister, journalist, Member of Parliament, Cabinet Minister—a gregarious life. There had been a great romance. There had been brief incursions into schoolmastering, amateur acting, and a course of musketry. There had been vicissitude, if not storm; there had been change, if not catastrophe. There had been political defeat as well as political success. The result is legible on every page of those admirable biographies of Rousseau and Voltaire, Cromwell and Burke, Cobden and Gladstone. The great biographer had greatly lived. It was this which enabled him to write with such sympathy and penetration of the temptations of adolescence, the fatefulness of middle age, and the wistfulness of declining years. His biographies are full of the wisdom of life. They abound in observations so shrewd, appreciations so just, aphorisms so profound that, were I to begin to quote, I should end not with an essay but with an anthology.

And because he had doubted he could understand men who believed. A great rationalist, he wrote two masterly "lives" of a great Puritan and of a great Churchman, and of those two biographies

the religious part is by no means the least valuable. There is nothing paradoxical in this. Honest belief and honest doubt are both the fruits of deep spiritual introspection. Both may be religious, in the deeper sense of the word. It was the author of the essay on Compromise himself who wrote, as if in answer to his friend Meredith's superior pronouncement " women cannot be happy without a religion," " *nor men either.*" It was not against Belief, but fashionable Belief, in other words hypocrisy, subscription to Articles in which the subscriber did not believe, conformity with tests which the conformist did not respect, that the unfashionable John Morley of the 'seventies put so terrible a lance in rest. For him it was less important whether what a man believed was true than whether he truly believed it. He could respect a faith he did not share, provided always that it had its roots in Conviction. If, unlike the great Jacobean mystic, he could hear the Ave Maria bell without an elevation, one may be sure that he could not listen to it without emotion. His pages on religion are never, like Voltaire's, disfigured with a sneer ; he is often critical, but never derisive. He is always and everywhere a moralist, and it is characteristic of him that he does not confine himself to the morality of conduct, but is equally concerned with what he calls " the morality of intelligence " and even the " morality of style." The morality of style ! Was there ever a better definition of style than his : " it is agitation rigorously restrained, the touching and penetrative music which is made prose by the repressed trouble

of grave and high souls" ? There is the secret of his literary excellence.

He was not only deeply but widely read. To attempt a *catalogue raisonné* of his noble library would be to enumerate almost everything that was worth reading in literature, both ancient and modern. His favourite branch of reading was history, nor was the choice surprising, for history it is, as a wise man has remarked, that "sets us free." He read it not with the narrow vision of the specialist in the "seminar," but with the wide outlook of the man of affairs, and was equally conversant with the great Athenians, the writers of the Empire and the Augustan age, the Florentine School of statecraft, the English historians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and that glittering pageant of French writers which begins with Voltaire and ends with Albert Sorel. He never skipped or sampled a good book, and if Macaulay could boast of the cantos of the "Faërie Queene" that he was one of "the very few and very weary" readers who had been "in at the death of the Blatant Beast," Lord Morley could claim with no less justification that he was of the elect who had read the whole of the thirteen volumes of Carlyle's "Frederick" and had persevered to the tragic grandeur of the end. But his favourite writers belonged to every school of literary art. Sententious writers made a peculiar appeal to him, and there is no better illustration of his range of reading in this direction and his discriminating judgment than the admirable essay he wrote upon "Aphorisms." Burke, of course, he knew as few

men know him, and he used to tell with rare enjoyment a story of an old lady who, meeting him for the first time, and wishing to air her attainments, said, " You ought to read Burke, Mr. Morley "—as though she were admitting him to a literary secret. I have no doubt that, with characteristic courtesy, he expressed his gratitude, and promised to profit by the advice. He once wrote that his " masters in early manhood " were Austin's " Jurisprudence " and Mill's " Logic " and " Utilitarianism." But these were merely stepping-stones. The splendid rhetoric of Bossuet appealed to him with the same call as that of Burke ; the great moralists, Bacon and Pascal, to name but two, were often on his lips, the French " Encyclopædists " were for a long period his daily bread, and the whole literature of what is called " belles lettres " was to him an open book. His favourite novelist in French was Georges Sand, in English George Eliot. It was a happy choice of Messrs. Macmillan to appoint him editor of the famous series of " Englishmen of Letters," a series at that time unique of its kind, for there was no man of his generation with so catholic a taste. But there were just half a dozen writers to whom he turned and returned throughout his life for spiritual refreshment. They were Lucretius and Sophocles among the ancients, and Wordsworth, Goethe, and Victor Hugo among the moderns. And among mediæval writers Dante—" I am madly a Dantean " he said to me towards the close of his life. It is not difficult to divine the secret of the common appeal which writers

so diverse made to his taste. For each of them has his message for the spiritual aspect of life. The great Epicurean poet appealed to him by his passionate love of truth, and his fortitude ; the Greek tragic dramatist by his belief in the sovereignty of moral law ; the great Florentine poet by his divine gift of compassion ; the giant of the French Romantics no less by his profound pity ; Wordsworth and Goethe, so rightly linked by Matthew Arnold, by their serenity of spirit.

The entry of such an intellect into the dusty arena of politics at a time when its possessor was already far advanced into middle age, and the almost instant recognition it won therein, present a remarkable phenomenon in English political history. He was disqualified by the possession of two great qualities which are always objects of suspicion to his fellow-countrymen—he was at once brilliant, in the best sense of that much-abused word, and outspoken. The English people distrust brilliance, and are afraid of outspokenness. The possessors of those uneasy qualities are regarded with the same suspicion as those lean and sleepless men who cost Julius Cæsar so many anxious vigils. If you are at once dull and ambiguous, you will go a long way in English public life. The author of the monograph on Robespierre could never be dull, and the writer of the essay on Compromise was anything but ambiguous. And he was a rationalist, nay an agnostic, in days when the vast majority of his fellow-countrymen looked upon an agnostic as a child of the Devil. He had written God with a small " g " and had not even sought

that safe highway between belief and unbelief, which is known as Deism, rudely dismissing its God, as he did, as " a sort of constitutional monarch reigning but not governing." It is a strange paradox of our history that the two political idols of the Nonconformists, the thews and sinews of the Liberal party, were an Agnostic and a High Churchman, and, stranger still, these two, Morley and Gladstone, were themselves linked by the closest ties of friendship. But the attraction which the one had for the other, and which both exercised over their following of Dissenters, was a triumph of character. The Nonconformist instinct was right, it recognized in both protagonists, with all their faults, a devout seriousness and a noble high-mindedness such as is rarely brought to the service of public life. And a triumph of character Morley's political career remained, for it could hardly be called a triumph of achievement. He presents the peculiar spectacle of a statesman who has left almost no trace on the statute-book, of a party leader who had no personal following, of an orator who lives not by what he spoke, but by what he wrote. In nearly every political issue he found himself an accessory after the fact. There were obvious limitations. The more sure a man is of himself intellectually—and certitude is the note of all that Morley wrote—the more insecure he is in practice. For life never conforms to theory, and it is the supple opportunist, not the lofty moralist, who is at home in the game of politics. Gladstone is only an exception because he was a casuist. What, indeed, would be the

fate of a politician who, from matins to evensong, interrogated himself daily with the catechism, "*What* do I believe? *Why* do I believe it?" More than that, Morley was the *thinker* in politics, viewing every problem, as it presented itself, with large discourse, "looking before and after." He had his eyes on the horizon. But a statesman, though he may easily not look far enough ahead, must never look too far. The "philosopher king" is a Platonic myth. Morley was too great a thinker to be altogether successful as a politician, just as Goschen was too much of an economist to be altogether satisfactory as a Chancellor of the Exchequer. The difference between a politician, a statesman and a thinker is well marked: the first keeps his eyes on the ground, the second raises them to the middle distance, but the last, like the Psalmist, lifts up his eyes to the hills. His vision is the most ennobling, but it is not the most practical.

And it was thus that Morley looked at the War. He saw it as many people are beginning to think it was—as a tragedy in the true, the deepest and the Greek sense, that is to say not as a conflict of right with wrong, but as the far more poignant conflict of right with right—France embattled against the German peril, Germany under arms against the Muscovite menace. In August 1914, when we were all acclaiming Russia as a new and mighty star in the firmament of Liberal powers, he remembered that Russia does not change, and with the eye of a seer he saw that, whatever might be

her political innovations, she would prove at the end of the war to be as aggressive abroad, and as ruthless at home, as she had ever been under the Romanoffs. He looked back centuries and again, narrowing the range of his vision, he looked back just seven years and saw the Anglo-Russian entente as the beginning of all the evil. And who to-day shall say with any certitude how far that diplomatic device provoked a war that otherwise would not have come, or how far it forearmed us against a war that was bound to come? In those fateful August days of summer heat, when the sun seemed to stand still, and "there was no day like it, before it or after it," no man went through more deep tribulation of spirit than he. But when one's neighbour's house is on fire it is no good stopping to ask if it is a case of arson. One has to act. The Cabinet acted in the only way it could act, and the most distinguished member of it retired into his cloister to brood upon the awful import of its decision.

Some day—but the time is not yet—I may publish the whole of what he said to me on the genesis and development of the European tragedy, and in particular on the parts played by his colleagues. More in sorrow than in anger did he speak of one who had played the part of Mr. Facing-bothways, of another who impersonated Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, of a third who at the eleventh hour showed himself to be Mr. Feeble-mind. A little group of dissentients formed itself around him in the critical days of August 1914, and great play was made with his name, but he

was not seeking to form a political " cave," and when they fell away from him—for reasons in no way dishonourable to them or discreditable to him —he made no complaint. It was in pity not in asperity that he spoke of one of them who left him at the eleventh hour, as " a weak vessel "—it was not his decision that he condemned but his indecisiveness. He went through his Gethsemane quite alone. I saw him at intervals during the progress of the mighty conflict, and hearing him talk of the War and all its agonists and protagonists, one seemed suddenly to see it not with the short vision of the reader of despatches recording an advance here and a retreat there, a battle lost or a battle won, a province occupied or a province redeemed, but as a vast historic tragedy unfolding itself like the " Dynasts," with the spirit of Immanent Will brooding over it and informing it, and the Chorus of the Pities accompanying it.

> " He looked on Europe's dying hour
> Of fitful dream and feverish power;
> His eye plunged down the weltering strife,
> The turmoil of expiring life.
> And he was happy, if to know
> Causes of things and far below
> His feet to see the lurid flow
> Of terror and insane distress
> And headlong fate be happiness."

But the increasing knowledge of these things brought, indeed, not happiness to him but increasing sorrow. He saw far beyond a successful stroke of strategy, he saw beyond " ultimate " victory, he saw beyond ultimate defeat. For he knew that there is nothing ultimate in Life. History, as

a great historian has said, " does not stop short." Here is a letter, one of the many I have, one of the few I shall ever publish, written to me in France in January 1915.

" It is very pleasant to me that you should make time to write me such an interesting letter. Some of its contents are painful enough, almost incredibly so. The precise bearing of them upon policy and the avowed objects of the War as set out by Ministers, we may well discuss when we meet. Meanwhile, I forbear, partly because I have the fear of censors before my eyes, partly because I respect your time, and *partly because I wait* (*with extreme confidence*) *to see the result. I wait the fourth and fifth acts, before I judge the tragedy.* I only hope that the generalship which is to bring the War nearer to some sort of end will prove itself better than the statesmanship which opened it."

That " confidence " was not the boisterous confidence of victory. The fifth Act of the tragedy has yet to come, the epilogue has yet to be written. In Germany to-day every one is talking of " the next war." The Treaty of Versailles already appears less as a " Peace " than as a truce. He foresaw all that. Witness this—it is a conversation, the date February 15, 1918, when the ideologue of Washington had captured with his fond dreams of a new Millennium the facile imaginations of us all.

" As for Wilson's talk of a World-peace and a ' Congress of Vienna,' how can you settle the

Balkan boundaries or even Alsace-Lorraine? Alsace-Lorraine! As Millerand said to me a month ago, the Germans can't admit the claim and the French can't renounce it. For the Germans it would be to dethrone the statue of Bismarck from its pedestal."

Barely a year later the ideologue of Washington was dethroned from his pedestal, and there was none so poor to do him reverence. Little more than two years passed and the Balkan "settlement" had proved itself to be what it is to-day, an open sore, inflaming the whole of South-Eastern Europe. Six years have run their course, and to those who, like the writer, have served in Germany during the greater part of them, it is only too obvious that the German attitude to the enforced annexations is the French attitude of a generation earlier—"Always think of it, never speak of it." In 1919 we all saluted the Treaty as if it were a new edition of Kant's famous "Project of Perpetual Peace," a project, be it remembered, whose publication was followed by twenty years of almost perpetual war. Are we any nearer to that "far-off divine event" towards which, the poet fondly hoped, the whole creation moves? When we were all throwing up our caps in the summer of 1919, Lord Morley, brooding in the solitude of his library among the ghosts of centuries, saw (as he wrote to me) beneath the superficial calm of the waters "the raging whirlpool which the foolish of the world suppose to be running dry." All these things, he seemed to say, must needs come to pass, but the end is not yet.

Truly one may say of him what he has said of Burke. Men turned to him as they went of old to Ahithophel, whose counsel was as if a man had inquired of the oracle of God.

And as he looked at events, so he looked at men. He saw them in their littleness without ceasing to see them in their greatness. He was neither dazzled by remoteness nor disillusioned by propinquity. He saw them steadily and he saw them whole. All his colleagues were, I think, a little in awe of him. Indeed, for a politician to have a historian and a thinker at his elbow looking at him and his makeshifts *sub specie æternitatis*, soliloquizing as to what he and his policy will look like a hundred years hence, must be singularly disturbing even to the professional complacency of a politician. The story of Morley and Asquith sitting on the Treasury Bench together during the stormy passage of the Home Rule Bill, Morley wondering what, when they are both old, and "we come to look back upon all this," it will seem like, and Asquith bluntly replying, "Only as a part of the regular day's work," is characteristic, in its contrast, of the two men. Mr. Asquith in those days, whatever might be the case in later years, was sure of himself as only a man without imagination can be. Morley was never quite sure. And though positive of many things when young, he became, like all wise men, less and less sure of anything as he grew old. "Frederick Harrison," he said to me two years before his own death, "says that at ninety he adheres to all he wrote when young, and that in everything he has been

right. Now *I* feel I've said some very foolish things." Mr. Asquith he was wont to describe as an "*esprit positif*"—"Asquith's always sure of himself; he once said to me, 'all the most important steps I've taken in my life, and the most successful, I've taken against the advice of others—taking 'silk,' going into Parliament, and my marriage.'"

He was, as I have said elsewhere, a shrewd, sometimes even a devastating, critic of Mr. Lloyd George, and of his attitude to him, one might almost say what he himself said of Rousseau's attitude to Man in the abstract: "he admired him most when he saw him least." By 1921 he had become very critical of his policy. But again it is characteristic of his largeness of heart that, the moment he heard he was ill, he began to make every allowance for him. In reply to some political criticism of mine, he wrote, "Don't forget that Ll. G. has had more than ordinary hard lines since your last letter to me. He has been, as all the world should be aware, much disabled by bad health. The burden of his public cares has been quite extraordinarily heavy."

Nor was he one of those whose friendships are bounded by their political opinions. He had too much charity for that. He had friends in both camps, the most notable among his political opponents being Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. The story of that friendship is one singularly honourable to both men, and one may be sure that Lord Morley gained as much thereby as he gave. It is worthy of note that the chapter called "Characteristics" in the *Life of Gladstone*, and the most notable of

its chapters, was written at the suggestion of Mr. Chamberlain. A certain Irish Nationalist M.P. was strangely shocked, on the appearance of the *Recollections*, to find that, by Lord Morley's own admission, he and Mr. Chamberlain had for years "lived like brothers." So they had, and why not? The friendship began in the days when the one was the rising hope of the Radicals in the Commons, and the other their stoutest protagonist in the Press, and it continued to the end. In those days David and Jonathan were not more inseparable. They were always together in the stalls of the theatre and the opera, they hunted in couples in France and in Germany. They took counsel of one another on all critical occasions. The Home Rule issue, with its inevitable schism, strained the friendship, but it never broke it. Mr. Chamberlain, indeed, wanted to make a "pact" that neither should attack the other on the platform, but this Lord Morley would not accept, and for a time there was some coolness. The full story will doubtless be told some day. I believe that it will be found in every way creditable to Mr. Chamberlain, whose reputation for straightforwardness has been enhanced by everything that has come to light since his death. "He was," Lord Morley once declared to me, "the most loyal of men." And Lord Morley followed the career of his friend's son, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, who has added new lustre to a name already illustrious, with warm interest and affection. "Chamberlain," he said, "has given Austen an ideal political education—he sent him to Berlin, and he sent him to Paris,

and in Paris he sat at the feet of many wise teachers in the *École politique*."

What did he regard as his chief political achievements? They were not numerous. His political career was, as I have said, a triumph of character rather than of achievement. Moreover, one has to remember that by the time when, late in middle life, he entered politics most of the causes for which he had fought had been won. The extension of the franchise was a fact accomplished by the Act of 1884, public elementary education had been conceded by the Act of 1870, though the compromise effected with the Church Schools and denominational education by that Statute was not as satisfactory to the author of the trenchant tract on *National Education*, his first published book, as it might have been. The University tests had been abolished, the Irish Church had been disestablished. Heresy hunts were becoming a thing of the past: "blasphemy" at common law had been reduced to language calculated to provoke a breach of the peace. What remained of the causes he had most at heart? Ireland and Women's Emancipation. And it was his part as a protagonist in these two, and his record as an administrator with a strong hand in India, of which he was most proud.

"The *Morning Post* refers to me," he said to me with some impatience, the more accentuated perhaps as he was an admiring and a constant, if dissentient, reader of that brilliant and fearless journal, "as a 'visionary'? What of Home Rule, what of emancipation of women, what of Ireland? Was I a 'visionary' there? . . .

Montagu calls himself my disciple," he went on, in accents of repudiation, " I see very little of my teaching in him. This dyarchy won't work. As for his strange plea for rousing the masses of India out of their ' pathetic content ' by reforms for which they do not ask, and which they cannot work, it's a most unwise remark. My reforms were quite enough for a generation at least " (21st January, 1921).

Of women's claims to the suffrage he had been, as became a disciple of Mill, one of the earliest supporters, and his faith in the cause was not in the least shaken by the outrages which disfigured that movement in the days immediately preceding the War. It was a purely intellectual sympathy ; he did not cultivate the society of women, and there can have been few who could really claim his friendship. I have never known a man of his wide range of sympathies who discussed women less. Not of him could it be said what Goethe said of himself, " the Eternal Feminine is always beckoning us on." One conversation on the subject is worth recalling. It began with a rather obvious remark of mine that women were " different " from men :

Lord Morley : I've heard that so often. But I never hear *how* or in what respect they are different.

J. H. M. : In their lack of the creative instinct —in art, in science, in literature, in music. Nature seems to have exhausted herself in endowing them with the greatest of all creative functions.

Lord Morley : I don't agree.

J. H. M. : Well, you have known all the great Victorian sages. Can you recall one woman

whom you would place on the same level as Mill, Huxley, Darwin, Browning, Carlyle, and all the rest of them ?

LORD MORLEY : Yes. George Eliot. She was even greater in her conversation than in her books.

J. H. M. : Wasn't Mill, in spite of his vindication of women's intellect, a very bad judge of it ?

LORD MORLEY : Yes, that's very true. I once asked Carlyle if Mrs. Mill was as great a woman as Mill thought her. Carlyle replied, " Mrs. Mill has the most *unwise* appetite for knowledge of any woman I know." She used to ask Mill the most elementary questions about every conceivable subject, which enabled Mill to give with an air of profound wisdom the most satisfying answers, and that flattered him. As for her daughter, of whom Mill had an inordinate opinion, she was a terrible bore.

J. H. M. : Do you really think it easy for men and women to deliberate together ?

LORD MORLEY : No, but education will change all that.

J. H. M. : Your friend Meredith seemed to think the process would be a long one. Do you remember the first page of *Richard Feverel :* " Woman will be the last thing to be civilized by man " ?

LORD MORLEY : That's true, but man has not yet completed the civilization of himself. In civilizing women he will civilize mankind.

The keynote of his character was compassion. Not inaptly might he have taken as the motto of a life of singular devotion the words of the poet—

> " He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things both great and small."

His life was illumined by many acts of noble

charity of which the public never knew, and he was the last man to publish them. No man had a better claim to Burke's description of the "true lawgiver"—that "he should have a heart full of sensibility; he ought to love and respect his kind." The impulse which drove him to vindicate the claims of women to the suffrage, in the days when such an advocate was as a voice crying in the wilderness, was a deep conviction of the oppression they had suffered at the hands of men. He was a lover of animals, and as such, like Thomas Hardy, a contemner of the chase. "I have never killed an animal in my life," he once said to me, "and if I ever write anything more, I think it will be a tract against field sports, although my fellow-peers will think ill of me." His inseparable companion in his old age was a fox-terrier, and readers of the *Recollections* will recall the happy, whimsical touch with which he characterizes his little companion, with its insatiable questing in the heather, after the manner of its kind, as a "chartered metaphysician," ever seeking it knew not what. They grew old together, and the dog followed its master like his own shadow; the two united in that strange communion of man and beast which, to those who know dogs and love them, is more intimate, and not less affecting, than any intercourse of men. A small thing, the reader may say, but it was characteristic, for it is not in the gestures of the arena, but in the familiar and domestic things of a man's home that you divine the man. And this man was noble. Of him it shall be said, as was said of Cromwell, "a larger soul hath seldom dwelt in house of clay."

CHAPTER II

CHARACTERISTICS

When the last will and testament of the subject of this memoir were given to the world they were greeted in many quarters as an act of apostasy without precedent in the history of letters. The distinguished biographer's direction to his executors, enforced with such sacramental words, that they should neither aid not abet any biography, seemed to some like the abjuration of a life's vocation. It has excited much speculation, most of it very wide of the mark, and some impertinence. True it is that there is a rule of law that a man's rights in his reputation die with him—*actio personalis moritur cum persona*—and such an attempt at their posthumous protection may seem to some to savour too much of an imposition of the " dead hand " upon the living. But if the legal rule is to become an ethical obligation, no man who had ever done the State some service would be justified in burning any of his letters, however indiscreet, or in destroying any of his diaries, however introspective. Few, indeed, there are who would accept public life on such onerous terms. All the political biographies that have been published conceal far more than they reveal, and Lord Morley, who in

his younger days had enforced the doctrine that the more unseasonable the truth the greater the necessity for proclaiming it, had no desire to go down to history as a practitioner of what the casuists call the " economy " of it. He had written a memorandum on our foreign policy before the War, which was a kind of *apologia* for his resignation, and when I urged him on a comparatively recent occasion (June 24, 1922) to publish it in the interests of historic truth, he replied :

" No ! the truth can *never* be known. It will never overtake the legend. I have read many books of late, dealing with events in which I took some part, and all of them are wrong. ' History ' always misleads. Far more depended on the conversations of half an hour, and was transacted by them, than ever appeared in letters and dispatches."

And when I answered that this came with an ill grace from one who had written so much history, I was met with the unanswerable retort that that was all the greater reason why he should sin no more. But the reasons which men give—and believe—for their decisions, are not always those which animate them. It was not literary contrition, or even metaphysical doubt, but the congenital reserve of a fastidious temperament that dictated this direction to his executors. That distinction of Dryden's between history and biography—" in the one you are conducted into the rooms of State, in the other you are led into the private lodgings of the hero and see him in his undress "—

goes to the root of the matter. Lord Morley had no desire to be seen *en déshabillé*. There have indeed been few public men more sensitive and certainly none more shy. He was far from being indifferent to fame, but he hated gossip and had no words too strong for that type of "Memoirs," now so fashionable, which has added a new terror to social life. As one who had the privilege of his confidence and affection to the end, I should requite it ill if in this chapter I wrote anything which ministered to the vulgar appetite for such small beer, and indeed I have some compunction about writing at all. My excuse, if excuse be needed, must be that so much has been written in the way of legend that something may well be written by way of truth.

When, for instance, I read, in an otherwise admirable obituary notice in the *Times*, that "Lord Morley was not ready with retort; wit and humour are seldom to be found dwelling in a mind so serious as his," I feel it is high time that some one who knew him well should disclose to the world the *obiter dicta* of one who was unquestionably the most fascinating talker of his time. Lord Morley's conversation was alive with wit and humour. His characterisations in talk of his political colleagues, of which more in a moment, would make a piquant and disturbing volume; they were sometimes mordant, often witty, and always shrewd. He was a master of dialectic, and in the thrust and counter-thrust of an argumentative duel his mind was as supple and his wit as keen as the wrist and eye of a good fencer. These

mental qualities endured to the end. In the last two years his mind was, it is true, often far away, and at his own table he seemed to be listening less to the voices of his guests than to the inner voices of the past, but, once arrested by a remark, the old wit would flash out like a bright blade, even though the fingers sometimes fumbled with the scabbard. Thus, on hearing a certain doctrinaire Labour politician—and no man hated doctrinaires more than Lord Morley—described as having "such a well-stored mind," he thrust in, "I have as little use for a well-stored mind in politics as for a well-lined pocket—what is knowledge without judgment?" And when the writer, in response to his parting inquiry, "How long do you remain in Germany?" replied, "God knows!" quick as light came the comment, "Ah, you're a Theist, I perceive." This was wit. And there was no less humour in his explanation of Gladstone's preference for him to Chamberlain: "You know I think that, as a High Churchman, Mr. Gladstone could tolerate an agnostic but he could not bear a Dissenter."

The only way to convey the play of his supple mind is to set down conversations as they actually occurred, and this I propose to do. It is a method open to an objection of which no one is more sensible than myself—it involves the intrusion of the writer's own personality. I would only plead in confession and avoidance that, as will presently appear, I generally got the worst of the argument.

No characterization of Lord Morley would be complete which omitted to take account of that

" dualism or more than dualism " which he perceived in the character of Mr. Gladstone, and which was no less apparent in his own. It was full of those contradictions which give to character half its interest and all its charm. The apostle of no compromise in opinion, he was, more often than not, all for compromise in action ; an intellectual in the best sense of the word, he distrusted idealists and hated ideologues ; a pacifist, he had no words too profane for the ark of that covenant which men call the League of Nations ; disliking violence as only another form of cruelty, he had no faith whatsoever in the schemes of men to make war impossible ; a rationalist, it is true, he was none the less at heart profoundly a mystic. Deeper than all these contradictions was the fundamental contradiction of two vocations. To the end of his public days he was a man of letters in the custody of a politician, and not infrequently he broke loose from his gaoler. Great was the hue and cry in Downing Street on those occasions, until the political invalid, invisible and inaudible to his colleagues, had been run to earth in the monastic seclusion of his library by that most admirable of political physicians, Mr. Alfred Spender, whose charming bedside manner not even Lord Morley could resist. But there were times when the Cabinet Minister was as inaccessible as Lord Chatham, and almost as irascible. Charles Villiers, walking down Whitehall one day during Palmerston's last Ministry, and observing a pillar of cloud arising from the chimneys of No. 10, Downing Street, was heard to observe, " I suppose

they're burning Mr. Gladstone's letters of resignation." How many burnt offerings could have been made of similar valedictions to political life from the hand of Lord Morley, not even Mr. Asquith could tell us; for it was a habit already contracted as early as Mr. Gladstone's last Ministry, as the reader of Sir Algernon West's fascinating pages may discover for himself.

What was the explanation of these moods of estrangement not only from politicians but from politics? Undoubtedly an abnormally thin skin was one, and we have Lord Balfour's authority for the proposition that a politician should be pachydermatous. Ambition—and Lord Morley was profoundly ambitious—should be made of sterner stuff. But I venture to think that Lord Morley, despite the glittering prizes that he won, and, winning, greatly enjoyed, was out of his element in the heat and dust of politics. Not in that arena is the "immortal garland" to be won. He might with truth have said of himself what de Vigny said in quite another connection—"J'ai porté dans une vie toute active une nature toute contemplative." The writer of one obituary notice has stated, in common with many others, that Lord Morley rated political action as a form of human enterprise superior to devotion to letters. So, with a certain qualification, he did. But men are often attracted by their opposites; they often refuse to believe that what they can do well is what they could do best; they have been known to depreciate their own vocation in order to establish their aptitude for one to which Nature has never called

them. Hence the idolatry of men of letters towards men of action : Carlyle, a man of words, is always apostrophizing the men of deeds, and is obviously uneasy at finding that Frederick the Great has also a weakness for the written word ; Mommsen, the grammarian, is almost hypnotized by Julius Cæsar, the man of action, and so uncomfortable at finding that his hero wrote verse that he is driven to plead for him that it was very bad verse. There is often a kind of vicarious violence about men of letters. It has been pointed out by Sorel and Sainte-Beuve, and the classic example is the advent to power at the French Revolution of the intellectuals who " realized their metaphors and cut each other's throats." The authentic men of action are never as violent as men of letters would have them to be, nor, indeed, as illiterate.

It is this attraction towards his opposite that accounts for Lord Morley's literary passion for two types—the soldier and the ecclesiastic, the almost hypnotic attraction which men of blood and iron in history exercised over his imagination, Calvin and Strafford, for example. He once told me that one of the books he had always desired to write was a life of the dictator of Geneva. As for Strafford, he had an irresistible and recurrent fascination for him. Of Cromwell we shall hear more. But he was by no means so certain, as some of the commentators on his career would have us believe, that his choice of a career had been prudent. In his declining years he looked back with a kind of wistful doubt—as who does not ?—at certain

partings of the ways, and asked himself if his election between politics and letters had been wise, and on my repeating a remark made to me by Mr. Thomas Hardy, " If only Morley had let politics alone, he might have been the Gibbon of his age," he was visibly disquieted. He put to me the question as to the relative superiority of the two vocations so often that I could not but feel that he was putting it to himself, " Which, if you had had your choice, would you rather have been, Gibbon or Pitt ; Macaulay or Palmerston ? " This was a favourite catechism of his. This uneasiness betrayed itself in many ways.

When Paderewski became Prime Minister of Poland, the first thing he did was to assure his friends that he had not touched a piano for years. When Lord Morley became Lord President of the Council, and was asked by Mr. Thomas Hardy, at a luncheon-party in Downing Street, what books he had been reading lately, he was met with the lofty reply, " I never read anything." At that moment Lord Morley the politician had John Morley the man of letters under strict lock and key. He was keeping up the appearances of a man of action. Mr. Hardy's gently ironic comment is too good to be lost—I hope he will forgive me for repeating it : " He seemed to draw an invisible ermine about him as though he were a sporting peer who never read anything but the *Pink 'Un.*" Yet, as I have good reason to know, and as will be seen later in these pages, Lord Morley's admiration for Mr. Hardy's genius was no less sympathetic than profound. These patrician moods were not

rare. Lord Morley loved power and enjoyed its exercise. It is no proof that he was best qualified to wield it. Over-emphasis is the mark of self-distrust. No more autocratic Secretary for India ever reigned in Whitehall; none ever consulted his Council less, and assuredly none ever admonished a Viceroy more. The disastrous results of this policy of keeping the Viceroy and his Council in leading-strings were never fully revealed until the report of the Mesopotamia Commission, long after he had relinquished the seals. There was a certain self-consciousness about him as an administrator; it was as though he were trying to live down a reputation as a doctrinaire. The essay on "Compromise" might almost be described as the Grammar of Dissent, and yet its author, to the surprise and wrath of some of his fellow Radicals, was as ruthless in the suppression of dissentient, in other words, seditious, opinion in India as though he had never taught mankind that there is only one thing worse than an ill-conceived opinion, and that is not having the courage to express it. Discussing with me the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, of which he did not approve, he said with great emphasis, "I consider the first duty of a Government is to *govern*," and he thought the reforms a dangerous concession to political agitation. On that point he may well have been right, but he never seemed to realize that the growth of the agitation was in a large measure directly due to a persistence, continued too long and carried too far, in the policy of governing India from Whitehall. It was a policy of his which I once ventured to

criticize with some sharpness,* and it is worthy of note that in a long letter which he did me the honour to address to me on the subject of my article—it was a review of his volumes of reminiscences—Lord Morley, while approving some things and challenging others, passed over this criticism in silence.

The attraction which, for all these temperamental reasons, men of action exercised over him was noted long ago by one of his most intimate friends, Lord Acton. The public is prone to think of Lord Morley as a stern moralist and a lofty idealist. How much that sternness and that loftiness were tempered by the magnetism of success will appear from the conversations recorded below. He was the last man to apply moral standards as a test of political action, a point on which he and Acton differed profoundly. His three great heroes in nineteenth-century politics were —with occasional deviation of view and always excepting " Mr. G.," whom with a kind of filial affection he always placed apart—Disraeli, Bismarck, and Cavour, all of whom might fairly be described as nothing if not realists. It goes without saying that, autocratic in administration though he was, he was often indecisive in issues of policy. The author of the essay on " Compromise " could not have been otherwise, for in the sphere of action one has always to compromise with one's opinions. He could justify compromise in others—as in the case of Disraeli,

* In the *Nineteenth Century* for January 1918. The article constitutes Chapter VI. of this book.

Bismarck, and Cavour ; his difficulty was to justify it in himself. On such occasions he went through torments of doubt and indecision. On one occasion, after giving his vote in the Cabinet against an earlier opinion of his own, he tossed a screw of paper across the table to Lord Haldane, who, on opening it, discovered these words: " If I were ' Honest John,' falsely so called, could I do this ? " And nowhere, as will presently appear, did this consciousness of responsibility press upon him so painfully as when, in the years of retirement, he tried to disengage himself from all complicity in the foreign policy of the Cabinet in the years immediately preceding the War.

If this dualism of character is the clue to Lord Morley's political eccentricities, it is no less the key to his attitude on religion. In an appreciation of his literary works which he was good enough to think adequate and just, I once wrote that " one is sometimes tempted to think that if Mill was the saint of rationalism, Lord Morley is its mystic, so true it is that, as he has said of Rousseau, when any type is intense it seems to meet and touch its opposite." Much might be quoted in support of this thesis from his earlier writings, in which his attitude often approximates most nearly to that of Renan, the Renan of whom it was well said that he unites the unction of the priest with the dialectic of the grammarian. Repugnant to him though religion was as an affair of dogma, it had a profound attraction for him as an act of faith. I recall a conversation with him at a luncheon-party at Flowermead, on January 6, 1921, at which

Mr. Birrell was present. We had all been discussing a volume I had given him as a Christmas present, Mr. Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*, and the conversation turned to Manning and Newman.

Mr. Birrell : I don't like Strachey's view of Newman as a kind of ineffectual dove ; Newman had talons.

J. H. M. : Yes, but what a compelling charm !

Lord Morley : Well may you say that. If I had been at Oxford in the days of the Oxford Movement, *I think I should have joined him.*

For religion as *une affaire de goût personnel*, as Renan called it, he had nothing but respect, provided it sprang from an indwelling grace of conviction. There are many passages in his writings in which he dwells with a kind of fervour on the beauty of holiness ; he once said to me, " I can't define holiness, but I know it when I meet it—I was always conscious of it when I encountered Mrs. Spence Watson." He used to tell with much enjoyment a delightful story of Lord Ripon, who was a Roman Catholic, and himself as guests at Hawarden :

" Things were going critically in Ireland just then. The evening of our arrival, dinner had no sooner ended than Mr. Gladstone, taking a silver candlestick in each hand, invited us to follow him to the library. He preceded us in silence. When we arrived there he invited us to sit down, placing one candlestick at Ripon's elbow and one at mine. He then bowed majestically and retired.

No word had passed his lips. I looked at Ripon and Ripon looked at me. We debated the mystery. Ripon thought bad news from Ireland. I knew not what to think. At that moment there fell on our ears the strains of the evening hymn in the drawing-room, and we understood. Mr. G. had given us a kindly excommunication."

Sir Algernon West has somewhere commented on a parting greeting from Lord Morley—" God bless you "—and has speculated as to its significance. Such speculation is idle ; Lord Morley remained an agnostic to the end of his days. There were elements of contradiction in his views about these things as there are in most men's, and it may well be that in his case, as in that of Renan, the plaintive importunities of childhood's memories were sometimes very strong. I only recall that one memorable day (June 25, 1912) at the Privy Council Office, after a long talk about his forthcoming rectorial address at Manchester, about which he was much concerned, for public speaking had become a great effort to him, he held my hand long as we parted, and, as I turned away, whispered, " Pray for me." In the last two years we talked much on this subject, and on one occasion, at the end of 1919, he opened his heart more fully than he had ever done. Much of that conversation cannot be recorded here, but the King of Terrors never numbered him among his subjects. I quoted the majestic passage from his favourite Latin poet in which Lucretius speaks of men's unreasonable fear of Death as the cause of all the hasty rivalries, cupidities, and treacheries of man's existence.

" But how true ! " he exclaimed, and went on to speak of the gradual decay of the belief in personal immortality except for what he called " the puerile curiosity " of the spiritualists. " Things were very different," he added, " when I first assumed the editorship of the *Fortnightly* and was thought audacious in opening its pages to W. K. Clifford and Huxley. Fitzjames Stephen used to say I was taking great risks when I spelt ' God ' with a small ' g,' though whether he meant here or hereafter I don't know." " As for progress, what signs of it are there now ? And all we Victorians believed in it from the Utilitarians onwards."

Of his literary work he has been his own critic in his *Recollections*, and by no means a too indulgent one. When Messrs.Macmillan decided at the end of 1920 to publish an edition of his *Collected Works*, there ensued a correspondence between him and me, some extracts from which the reader may be pleased to have as throwing new light on his own estimate of his literary career. I had been asked by the *Times* to write the leading article for the " Literary Supplement " on the subject of the new edition, and in sending me some advance proofs Lord Morley wrote *inter alia :*

" . . . I only trust you not to let friendship stand in the way of justice. . . . The most serious of the first triplet is *Compromise*, which is being modified somewhat in the new version, but without, I hope, losing any of the salt and savour that made an attraction of it when it first came out. Personally the only one on which I look with any sort of favour is *Cromwell ;* but an author's preference after all

proves nothing, does it ? I would give a good deal for a talk with you one of these days. Let not your next visit to this country be so much of a transitory flight. But I admit that our country is now too distracted to be over-cheerful for a man of balanced mind."

When the review * appeared he wrote a letter, dated February 12, 1921, which is so full of self-revelation that I quote it at some length, omitting, as far as possible, the all too kind passages in which he refers to him to whom it was addressed :

" I got the *Times* for Thursday the 10th. I took it eagerly in hand, read your article, re-read and felt more and more well pleased and warmly appreciative. . . . I need not say how many points your penetrating *obiter dicta* stir in my mind, and in some I feel faintly controversial, but I am well content to leave [them] for a later day, and an answer face to face in our own country. On one or two, my remarks on your remarks would be suggestive supplementals. For instance, you say that the key to the unity of so miscellaneous a collection is a passion for truth—and what estimate could place a man on a higher or more splendid pedestal, whether he be lawyer, statesman, divine, or other man in a front place ? For myself I would fain add passion for Freedom and passion for Justice ? Don't think me vain if I covet the whole trinity of them. I cannot trust myself to speak of your signal liberality. . . . The space and the prominence of place given to you by your Editor have been well justified by the serious

* It is reprinted as Chapter IV. of this book.

attention that you have devoted to an author who has always from his earliest days done his best to handle serious things in a serious fashion. . . ."

I have said that Lord Morley's characterisations of his colleagues would make a piquant and disturbing volume, but nothing would induce me to write it. There would be too many wigs on the green. He was a man of warm affections, but he was intensely and shrewdly critical of all his colleagues, though there were one or two exceptions, notably Mr. Birrell. Mr. Birrell endeared himself to Lord Morley by his witty and urbane conversation, his large humanity, and his love of letters. Of the others he was much more critical. Something must be allowed for a certain playful mischievousness in this in which there was more than a hint of Voltaire's prescription for a pleasant old age.* All these sallies I omit. But it is not illegitimate to recall two remarkable prophecies he made to me the Sunday after the declaration of war, one of them destined to prove remarkably true, the other remarkably false. Of Mr. Asquith he then predicted, " Mark my words, he is not the pilot to weather this storm "—a prophecy remarkable in its foresight in that the subject of it was then at the zenith of his fame and never appeared more secure in his position : he had carried his Cabinet with him and had ranged the Opposition on his

* " On a encore, en viellissant, un grand plaisir qui n'est pas à négliger, c'est de décompter les impertinents et les impertinentes qu'on a vus mourir, *les ministrès qu'on a vu renvoyer* et la foule des ridicules, qui ont passé devant les yeux."—Voltaire to Madame du Deffand (Faguet's *Voltaire*, p. 229).

side. Of Mr. Lloyd George he said, " This war ends the race between him and Winston ; his heart is not in this business—he is a man of peace. But Winston ! there'll be a great naval victory in the North Sea and he'll go down to history as the Chatham of his age." Lord Morley spoke of course at the moment when Mr. Lloyd George's secession from the Cabinet on the issue of the ultimatum to Germany had been almost an accomplished fact—of which more in a moment. Of Lord Grey he spoke with an asperity which was neither fair nor just, and was, indeed, the expression of a rankling sense of irritation at having been involved in a foreign policy in regard to which he could never, despite all his mental struggles, disengage himself from a measure of responsibility as a member of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Of Mr. Lloyd George he once said, " I think much of him—I mean I think much about him," which is the most concise way it could be put. In his *Recollections* Lord Morley never so much as mentions him. There was a time during which he succumbed to the magic of that personality and was not ill-pleased with his masterly flatteries, but, as with many another, the spell did not last, and he grew more and more critical both of the man and of his methods. Under the date February 15, 1918, I find this record of a conversation.

Lord Morley : If Ludendorff fails on the Western Front, Ll. G. wins—otherwise he is done. Of course he wants peace.

J. H. M. : His greatest gift is his " drive."

LORD MORLEY: Yes, he's got what Carlyle said of the Hindu god—he has a fire in his belly, but his weakness is looseness of mind.

J. H. M.: And his principles?

LORD MORLEY: Principles! Do you talk to me of his principles? What are they? But he is not dishonest, he's only tricky. Some shabbiness perhaps.

More than two years later there came a curious change of estimate.

LORD MORLEY: Ll. G. may yet emerge with the reputation of Burke.

J. H. M.: But he has no fixity of purpose. He has too many acts of apostasy.

LORD MORLEY: But hadn't Burke? Weren't all his utterances on the French Revolution "apostasies"? Isn't politics simply a matter of expediencies?

J. H. M.: Would you say that of Lincoln?

LORD MORLEY: Ah, his task was infinitely less complex. (July 30, 1920.)

But when the Lloyd George Government fell, Lord Morley had apparently arrived at some very definite conclusions about the head of it. On October 20, 1922, a few days after that event, three of us were Lord Morley's guests at Wimbledon; the other two were Mr. G. P. Gooch, the historian, and Mr. Guy Morley. Asked what he thought about the downfall of the Government, Lord Morley said, "I feel inclined to open a bottle of champagne." "Then you've revised your estimate of Mr. Lloyd George?" one of us asked.

He paused in reply, and then turning slowly round and looking his interlocutor full in the face, as was his wont in moments of emphasis, he delivered himself of a devastating judgment.

Many of Lord Morley's comments on his colleagues were a reflection of his feelings about the policy which had preceded the War and, as he would contend, had provoked it. It was a subject on which he felt very deeply. Mr. Lloyd George once told me in Paris, in May 1919, that whenever he met Lord Morley, which was not often, the latter always began the evening with the admonition, " No conversation about the last five years, please ! " But when I first discussed the matter with him—it was a few days after his resignation—this Statute of Limitations had not then begun to run—indeed in my own case he never enforced it, and he spoke with some freedom. On September 13, 1914, in a long conversation on the War, he made two points, or, if the reader likes, three. " I was always opposed to the Anglo-Russian agreement—so was Kitchener. Who stands most to gain out of this war ? Russia. Who is the real aggressor ? Russia. At the end of it we shall have her on our backs. What do you imagine will be the effect on the Indian mind of the employment of Indian troops against Europeans ? " and last of all, " What should *I* be doing in a War Ministry ? " As the years went on he elaborated his position and wrote that secret memoir, to which I have already alluded, in which he sought to exculpate himself from all responsibility for our entry into the War, and to inculpate three of his colleagues. I

doubt if its publication, which will now never take place, would have added to his reputation as a practical politician ; I am not sure it would not subtract from it, though it might well have enhanced his fame as a far-seeing thinker. There was sometimes a lack of coherence in his expression of his views on the subject, while according to Lord Haldane his memory was sadly at fault. One day he had a passage of arms with Lord Haldane, to whom I owe the following account of it. He was declaiming against the " conversations " between the British and French General Staffs in 1910 as a secret to which the Cabinet as a whole had not been a party, and himself the least. " But you *were* a party to them," replied Lord Haldane. This Lord Morley strenuously denied. " Have you got your red box of papers of the Committee of Imperial Defence ? " replied Lord Haldane. The box was produced. And out of it Lord Haldane extracted a memorandum of General Ewart's exposition to the Committee of Imperial Defence in 1910 of the plans for the concentration at Maubeuge. And at the foot of it, in Lord Morley's handwriting, were two tell-tale postscripts, the first, " *Doubtful if I ought to approve of this*," the second, " *But I suppose it's in the interests of European peace*." This story was told me some months after Lord Morley's death, and I never had a chance of catechizing him about it. He often returned to the theme as though it were an obsession. I have a note of a conversation on September 20, 1921, in which he asked me rhetorically, not for the first time, " Why didn't we *make it clear* to

the German Government that we wouldn't tolerate the invasion of Belgium?" I urged, "But that was just what Goschen did do," to which came the angry retort, "I don't care what Goschen said," and I changed the subject. But what he had in mind was that we should have made our intentions clear a great deal earlier, as to which much might be said on both sides.

Under the date January 2, 1921, I find this vivid description by Lord Morley of the Cabinet crisis in 1914.

"On August 2, a Sunday I think, we went to lunch at Beauchamp's—Lloyd George, Simon, and myself. Simon said to me before we went upstairs, 'I think I've got Ll. G.; he is with us.' The next day—half an hour before the Cabinet met—I said to Ll. G., 'I'm going.' He replied, 'Don't be in a hurry.' Half an hour later he said, "I stay. It's Belgium.' Simon resigned with tears streaming down his face at having to leave Asquith. The same evening Burns came to me and said, 'Simon's going to stay—he's withdrawn his resignation.'"

His views of his political colleagues may legitimately be regarded as one aspect of his views on public questions, and it is from that point of view, and no other, that I treat, and have treated, of them. They were rarely, if ever, the expression of a private liking or dislike and they never descended to gossip. He judged his colleagues as he judged characters in history. It is a terrible test to apply to one's contemporaries, and it is bound to diminish

their stature, but who, if any one, had so good a right to apply it? Who, indeed, was so well qualified, alike by the integrity of his character and the superiority of his judgment, to impose it? His views of the triumvirate whom he regarded as responsible not merely for England's participation in the war but for the war itself—in other words as *participes criminis*—were the expression of an intellectual conviction, not of a personal dislike. Indeed, with all three of them he had been on terms of personal friendship. I have already indicated his views of Lord Grey and Mr. Asquith in this respect—it is unnecessary to say more. As regards Lord Haldane, the situation was more complicated in proportion as the association had been closer, the friendship more intimate, and the identity of view more specious. How specious may be gathered from a remark of Lord Morley's to me in May 1915, immediately after Lord Haldane's enforced resignation—"He ought to have resigned with me at the outset." He had no sympathy with Lord Haldane when he fell, like Lucifer, from his place in the political firmament, for the simple reason that he felt that the case called for none. In his opinion —I am not expressing my own—Lord Haldane had so committed himself by certain public utterances before the war as to make his participation in the policy which directed the conduct of it impossible. This was a subject on which he discoursed to me with great freedom in May 1915. He did not, it need hardly be said, share the vulgar view, now quite discredited, that Lord Haldane had played

his country false. He regarded him not as the dupe of the Germans, still less as their accomplice, but as the dupe of his own temperament. All the admirable work Lord Haldane had done at the War Office did not blind him to the fact—so he regarded it—that Lord Haldane had practised in public a studied ambiguity of opinion as to the danger ahead, and had been too solicitous to be all things to all men, thereby achieving the remarkable feat of convincing the pacifists that Germany was never more pacific, and persuading the warriors, who indeed required no persuasion, that she was never more warlike. Perhaps Lord Morley did not make sufficient allowance for the enervating effects of a life-long indulgence in that intellectual drug known as Hegelianism, under the stupefying influence of which its devotees can both see a thing and not see it at one and the same time ; a dialectic which teaches its disciples that two opposite propositions can be asserted with equal truth, that affirmation is only a form of denial, and that to be is the same thing as not to be. It is about the worst apprenticeship for a statesman that could possibly be devised if the object of statesmanship is to enlighten the public mind. With his customary directness Lord Morley took the view that the disciple of Hegel was impaled on the horns of an inexorable dilemma—either he foresaw the drift of things or he did not ; if he foresaw it, he was secretive ; if, with all his opportunities, he did not foresee it, he was blind. Lord Roberts' attitude was to him far more intelligible ; talking of him he once said to me, " the more I see of

soldiers, the more I like them, they're so *direct*." "Haldane *now* says he foresaw the war," Lord Morley remarked to me after a certain fateful interview which Lord Haldane had given to an American newspaper in the spring of 1915; "it is the first time I have ever heard of it. Why did he not confide his foresight to his colleagues? He never talked like that in the Cabinet."

Lord Morley's minutes on the papers of the Committee of Imperial Defence do not dispose of the question. One would want to know not merely how much was said in the Committee but how much was whispered outside it. It is now pretty generally known that the Cabinet as a whole were kept in the dark as to what was going on. Lord Morley detested this auricular diplomacy, and his contention was that he, although a member of the Committee of Imperial Defence and for some time the official spokesman of the Government on foreign affairs in the Lords, had been kept just as much in the dark by the triumvirate of the old Liberal League as the rest of his colleagues. There is no getting away from the fact that he felt very bitterly about this. We have had the apologetics of two of these colleagues—Lord Haldane and Mr. Asquith—in the form of books which serve almost to conceal more than they reveal, and from time to time Lord Haldane went on issuing a mass of *addenda* and *corrigenda* in the form of articles, interviews, allocutions, which drove Lord Morley to exclaim with Juvenal—

> Semper ego auditor tantum? numquamne reponam
> Vexatus toties?

and again and again nearly precipitated the publication of that secret memoir to which I have alluded elsewhere. Lord Grey, who could tell us more than any one, has maintained a dignified and characteristic silence. Not till a generation hence, when the time comes for the historian, with more materials at his command than are at present accessible to the public, to substitute exegesis for apologetics, will the truth be known, and perhaps not even then. In his colloquial criticisms of these three colleagues there was sometimes more than a hint of differences of outlook going right back to the internecine warfare of the Liberal League. There is a hint of it in the ironical reflection in his *Recollections*, when referring to the events of 1915, on the failure of the apostles of " efficiency " to conduct the War without seeking the collaboration of their opponents. And there was more than a hint of it in the following remark made to me (on January 2, 1921):

" When Asquith became P.M. he was going to appoint Haldane Chancellor of the Exchequer. I went to him and objected to such ascendancy of the old Liberal League and threatened to resign, whereupon Asquith said, ' Then I'll send for Lloyd George.' "

There were differences of temperament here. Indeed, no two men could be more unlike than Morley and Haldane—the one emotional the other phlegmatic, the former all spontaneity, the latter all calculation. Between the two there was all the difference that divides genius from talent, that genius in which the heart is always equally

engaged with the enterprises of the head. It was just that which made Morley so endearing—it was the secret alike of his distinction and his charm. If Lord Morley's motto were, as indeed it was, the noble saying of Vauvenargues, " Great thoughts come from the heart," Lord Haldane's might well be that astute counsel of Bacon's : " Not to engage oneself too peremptorily in anything, but ever to have either a window open to fly out at or a secret way to retire by." Some one, when discussing that famous case in which the dead hand of the law " fell with a loud slap," as Maitland put it, on the living body of the Church, the Scottish Church case, once quoted in Morley's presence the blunt remark of Lord Macnaghten after hearing Mr. Haldane's voluminous exposition of the mysteries of the Westminster Confession, that the learned counsel's exposition had, if anything, only succeeded in making the matter even more obscure than it was before. " Ah," said Lord Morley, " that's just what I complain about. You can never be quite sure *what* Haldane means." No one ever said—or could say—that of Lord Morley.

One more quotation before I leave this subject. It is the record of a remarkable conversation on February 15, 1918, to which I shall return in another connection, for it covered a wide field :

J. H. M.: If Bismarck had been alive the *casus belli* of Belgium would never have arisen. He would never have been a party to the violation of Belgium.

Lord Morley : *Was* it our *casus belli?* Did

we put that straight to Germany? Did we give the Kaiser half an hour? Didn't we play into the military party's hands?

J. H. M.: But everything has gone to show that Germany had made up her mind to have war sooner or later.

LORD MORLEY: You mean it was "inevitable." That has been said of every war since Hannibal. I said to Asquith at the time, "We are only playing Russia's game." *Why* did she mobilise in the North as well as in the South? And by the end of the war we shall be sorry America ever came in—we shall have her on our backs.

And here our discourse drifted to other and more agreeable things—Mr. Hardy's prose and verse, Burke's *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, Stendhal and Renan, Meredith and Matthew Arnold, Rosebery and Haldane, with a mordant excursion by Lord Morley on the subject of President Wilson, whom he never liked.

Of all his political affections, Ireland lay nearest his heart. Although he hated violence and loathed cruelty he could not bring himself to condemn, even in private, the outrages which disfigured the Sinn Fein movement. Discussing with him the *pourparlers* with Sinn Fein in 1921, I said, in response to his inquiry, "I don't like concessions to murder." "But didn't Mazzini approve of assassination?" he replied, to which I bluntly retorted, "Do you?" It was the only time I ever came near to a quarrel with him. When I cited the Sinn Feiners' resort to torture, he said, "But wouldn't you get that among any peasantry?"

He was, however, anything but easy about these things, and more than a year earlier, in July 1920, he was nothing like so tolerant of them :

" Ireland and Russia are the two most ' Christian ' countries in Europe. To-day they are the most disfigured by violence and outrage. What do you make of that ? "

When the agreement came, Lord Morley, as all the world knows, went down to the House of Lords to give it his benediction. Nearly a year before this consummation he had entertained the idea of going down on quite another errand—at the time of the Lords' debate on that Home Rule Bill which Ireland never accepted.

" I should like to have been there," he said to me on January 6, 1921, " if only to have got up and said, ' If Mr. G.'s Home Rule Bill had been passed 30 years ago could Ireland have been worse than it is now ? Would it not have been better ? ' And then fallen dead like Lord Chatham."

A happier issue was in store for him. With heroic courage, the aged statesman, carefully tended by his nephew, Mr. Guy Morley, went down to the House of Lords and in faltering tones, which were almost inaudible a few feet away from him, made his last speech in favour of the country he loved so well. It was an act of faith rather than of reason, for a few days later—on December 22—he spoke to me in tones of great despondency about the future of Ireland.

" Where will they find the men to *run* the new Government in Ireland ? That's what I've been thinking about. Was there ever such an exhibition of human folly as in these Dail debates on ratification ? My only consolation has been to read up the history of Ireland in Lecky and our abominable treatment of her. All the faults of the Irish character are traceable to that."

He spoke to me of " the tremendous effect " of Lord Carson's speech in the Lords :

" If a division had been taken at that moment, I could not have answered for the result. No doubt he knew what he was talking about. He knew from the inside—the bribes given to effect this settlement and all the rest of it. But he was kind to me. When I referred in my speech to his talk of the ' abject humiliation of this day,' he interrupted, ' Not for you ! ' "

With one other conversation on the subject of Ireland I leave it. It was at a *tête-à-tête* dinner, on May 1, 1921, at the " Senior " (United Service) Club, of which he was an honorary member :

Lord Morley : If I were an Irishman I should be a Sinn Feiner.

J. H. M. : And a Republican ?

Lord Morley : No.

J. H. M. : Not every one is as staunch to the creed of Home Rule as you. Mr. Hardy, for instance. He told me lately that he had come to the old conclusion—that the Irish are a people who cannot live without a grievance.

LORD MORLEY : That's true. But we and the Church have made them so. There is something wayward, *diabolical* in them.

Nothing gave him greater pleasure in his later years than the conversion of the *Times* to Home Rule. He once described it to me as the greatest event in Irish political history since the conversion of Gladstone. " He has behaved nobly," he said of its distinguished Editor, Mr. Wickham Steed, whom he knew well, and to whom he once asked me to convey his congratulations on his leading articles on the Near Eastern Crisis, which appeared in the critical days of October 1922. The tribute to the *Times* was the more remarkable in that it came from one who had written of it that " it has always been the avowed principle of the conductors of that newspaper to keep very close to the political opinion of the day *in its unregenerate state*." The occasion of that utterance was his defence of Cobden's attitude in his difference of opinion with Delane, and this chapter of Lord Morley's writings * is singularly interesting in that it sets forth his views of what an editor's standards of behaviour should be. Cobden had complained, and with reason, of the " venom " of what he called his " masked foe," and in his complaint dwelt on the stealthy anonymity of such attacks. For a long time he had borne them in dignified silence, reflecting on the uselessness of contradicting any falsehood or calumny of this character " because it comes up again

* See chapter xxxii. (" Correspondence with Mr. Delane "), of Morley's *Life of Cobden*.

next day just as rife as ever," and consoling himself, with characteristic pugnacity, with the conviction that to be on the side of the truth and on good terms with the *Times* were two incompatible things. But an incident occurred, a rather grave case of misrepresentation, which overtaxed his patience, and he did a thing unprecedented and almost shocking in those days—although Mr. Lloyd George has since done it with considerable success. Finding that the *Times* refused to publish the letter in which he exposed the misrepresentation, he " publicly seized," as Lord Morley put it, its august editor by the hair of his head, in other words he named him, thereby creating " a tremendous sensation " in Fleet Street. More than that, he hinted at the personal ambitions of *Times* contributors to a colonial governorship in one place and a magistracy in another, published the editor's habits in dining out, and contrasted, with some piquancy, the " strict incognito " under which Mr. Delane attacked those whom he disliked with the anxiety of the same individual to be known as Editor of the *Times* when dining at rich men's tables. The attack was overdone, but it raised an important point of newspaper ethics with which Lord Morley deals in effective fashion—namely how far an editor is entitled to shelter himself behind anonymity in the case of persistent and proved misrepresentation. Without committing himself to Cobden's view that the name of every editor should be blazoned across his newspaper, as is the rule in France and Germany, he justifies Cobden's exposure of his enemy, while dryly defending an

editor's right to dine where he pleases. He evidently had no sympathy with what he calls "the charlatanry and mystery of editorship," and welcomed the disappearance of what he has called elsewhere "the Hieratic anonymity" of editors, hoping that, as their identity became better known, their sense of responsibility would be proportionately developed. For the rest, he put his faith in the increase in the number of newspapers as destructive of any pretension of any one of them to monopolize the ear of the public. He was fully conscious of the temptations of the editorial craft, and has enlarged on the dangerous complacency and affectation of superiority which the "posture" of the journalistic critic is apt to induce.*

In another utterance, and a carefully considered one, he went much farther. In the course of a remarkable article on "Anonymous Journalism," † with which he inaugurated his fearless editorship of the *Fortnightly Review*, he raised the whole question of whether anonymity in journalism was desirable, and answered it with an emphatic No. Therein he contended that not merely reviewing but leader-writing should be stamped and identified with the name of the writer. As things were—and indeed still are—the leader-writers of a newspaper were, he contended, a "secret society" liable to all the faults which attach to such fraternities. Secrecy, he insisted, "demoralizes," the members of such a society became affected, irresponsible, pompous, and in some cases malignant. Let the

* See the *Recollections*, i. 33.

† See the *Fortnightly Review*, September 1867.

writers of leading articles leave their "oracular tub" and come out from behind their "screen." His trenchant words are worth quoting at some length.

"The sense that the journalist personally, and not with an editor or an impersonal journal for buffer, is in contact with his readers steadies a man wonderfully. It makes him less ready to stoop to personalities in discussion, because he is conscious that personalities may in this case be *retorted* and their unbecomingness detected, whereas retort is impossible or futile against a journal. The knowledge that he has no mystic editorial ægis impresses him with the necessity of self-control."

Here, as with every theme he handled, he is concerned with the moral aspect of the question. He lifts it to the highest plane, looking at it as a problem of conduct in which the journalist's own honour and self-respect are engaged. He emphasizes the unfairness and one-sidedness of anonymous criticism. A leader-writer attacking a public man, is, to his mind, like an orator on a "tub," he is his own chairman, ruling his opponent out of order and closuring all discussion at will. "One might easily deal with the orator in private controversy, but the orator and his tub together are impregnable." And he proceeds in words of apostrophe which sound almost like a paraphrase of Cobden himself: "We want the public to know your name and address . . . in order to persuade the public that you are a mere mortal, with no more title to have your own way

than other mortals." We are still a long way in this country from the Continental practice of "leaders" bearing the signature of the leader-writer, but if ever that salutary change comes about it will owe much to his high-minded advocacy.

He held very strong views about the arbitrary temper in which some newspapers refuse to allow the objects of their criticism to defend themselves, though I doubt if he himself ever suffered in that way. He wrote much too rarely to the Press to give editors an opportunity, if so minded, of suppressing him. He was one of the very few public men who have never had a quarrel with a newspaper—at least I can recall none. His contributions to the Press, once he had left the career of journalism, were, indeed, very few—whether in the form of letters or articles. He wrote one remarkable letter to the *Times*, in his retirement, on the reprisals policy in Ireland, and the fact of it was a proof of how keenly he felt on the subject. And on rare occasions he wrote—always anonymously—for the *Times Literary Supplement*, a paper of which he had an extremely high opinion; the masterly appreciation of Mill which is to be found in the fourth volume of the *Miscellanies* originally appeared as an unsigned leading article in that journal.

The *Times* and the *Morning Post* were the two papers he read regularly almost to the end. His appreciation of good writing in the Press was quite independent of his political sympathies. Of the *Morning Post*, whose opinions were always at the very opposite pole of his own, he once

said, " I disagree with nearly everything they say, but it's the best polemical writing of its kind since Junius." And of the same paper on another occasion, " They seize every point." He was proud of having been a journalist, and no topic was more likely to engage his attention in talk than that of his old profession. One of the first questions he would put to a traveller from a foreign country was the position of the Press ; what was its influence on political life ; what talents did it attract ; what opinions did it help to form ; what part did the leader play in its economy ? He was keenly anxious to accept an invitation to the *Manchester Guardian* centenary dinner, but his doctor forbade it, and he acquiesced with the remark, " After all, at my age one doesn't *contemplate* centenaries with any pleasure—I am too near a centenarian myself for that." There can have been few distinguished journalists who did not at one time or another take counsel of him as the Nestor of their profession. He was fond of telling how he was in the middle of writing a leading article when the summons came to him from Mr. Gladstone ; he rose and obeyed the call, was offered the Chief Secretaryship for Ireland, went to consult Chamberlain, who " looked black as thunder—he knew what it meant," but advised him to accept, did accept, and then returned and finished his article.

He urged me one night at the " Senior " to " leave everything, the Army, the Bar, and the University, and devote yourself to literature." I gave my reasons for doing otherwise ; his reply

to one of them is interesting. I pleaded the *res angusta domi*, and said the prospect of depending for one's bread upon literature appalled me. He said, " It never appalled me ; I don't agree that a man can write better if he is financially independent ; I got £700 a year by writing for the *Saturday Review*, and I had nothing else to depend upon." When I put to him the same somewhat otiose question as Jeffrey put to Macaulay, " Where did you get your style ? " he answered, not, as might be expected, " From French models," but, without a moment's hesitation, " From the practice of journalism." But I think he meant the leisurely journalism of the *Fortnightly*, which is not quite the same thing as the breathless leader-writing of the daily Press.

Of his methods of work as a master of his craft I was privileged to see a good deal. It was in the composition of his last literary work—the *Politics and History*, which was written in 1912 and published in 1914. I say his last work, because the *Recollections*, although published later, were not the efflorescence of his old age, most of the pages therein having been written many years earlier—indeed, the first volume with its admirable literary portraits, was the work not of his decline but of his meridian. In his later years he wrote, as he spoke, with great difficulty—in fact, every kind of composition, whether literary or oratorical, had become an almost painful effort. The *Politics and History*, which originated as a rectorial address at Manchester, cost him many anxious vigils, both before its delivery and after it when he was casting

it into its final literary shape. He did me the honour to ask for my help at the outset—I would not mention it now but for the fact that it gave rise to an interesting scheme for another book which was never written and which now keeps company in eternal silence with those other spectral volumes on Lucretius, Goethe, and Calvin, which will never see the light of common day. My own part in the *Politics and History* was largely the part of Socratic midwife. Of the whole book only one page—that on the relation between law and politics—is from my pen, but Lord Morley was so over-generous in the many letters he wrote to me on the subject that I prayed him to say nothing more about it and to omit all reference to myself in its pages. The manuscript and the proof-sheets passed to and fro between us, accompanied by the exchange of many books and many illuminating little notes containing some of those searching interrogatories of which he was such a master.

"I am truly obliged by Guilland, and your preface to Hallam is full of pith and point. I look for your notes as apples of gold. 'Diffidence' was never more out of season and place, and I beg for them soon. Yes, I possess Sorel's *Question d'Orient*" (June 18, 1912).

"You will receive in two or three days from the printers slips of my enlarged address. I should be much your debtor if you could by and bye, at your leisure, read the thing over and favour me with any critical remarks that may occur to you. The more blunt and candid, the better. It may well

happen that the piece will never see the light, for I am deeply dissatisfied with its want alike of structure and of sharp edge. For I mean to work at the portions on Progress and the State. They are too crude as they stand. Only remember that it is impossible in such business to hurt my feelings " (July 9, 1913).

" I have another petition as usual. Before returning your piece on Historic Method I want you to write down in two or three (or one) plain sentences, what *is* Historic Method precisely in the sense you use the term . . ." (October 23, 1913).

It will be obvious from the last extract that it was not I who was playing the part of Socratic midwife this time, but my correspondent. It was he who was illuminating my darkness of conception.

When he went north to deliver the address—something of a heroic undertaking for a man who was already seventy-three years of age and physically frail—he was so agitated that I had almost volunteered to go with him. He was full of foreboding that he would be both obscure and inaudible. When I told him that Mr. C. P. Scott had asked me to write the leading article in the *Manchester Guardian* on the address, he was somewhat comforted—" At any rate you know what I'm going to say," he said to me at parting, " and what I shall mean when I say it." My " leader " has long ago passed into deserved obscurity, and the best that can be said of it is that it cheered him in a mood of despondency :

" To-morrow I return the books that you were kind enough to lend me. . . . The article in the

M. G.! It raised me out of the deep pit of dissatisfaction into which I had fallen . . ." (June 30, 1912).

From this literary communion was born that idea of another book which will now never see the light. Lord Morley suggested that we should collaborate in a work of which he would write one chapter or two, on the foundations of political belief and something more, for it was not only to deal with moral ideas in politics but with method —a kind of " Logic " of Politics in fact. What Newman had done for religious belief in the *Grammar of Assent*, he wished us to do for political belief. The *disjecta membra* of this book remain in my possession—notes of his and notes of mine—and some outline of the projected treatment may be found by the curious, if such there be, in an article * in the *Nineteenth Century* for March 1914, in which I took Lord Morley's *Politics and History* for my starting-point, as indeed it was to be his in our common venture. The War stopped all that. On taking farewell of him before leaving for France in November 1914, I expressed my sorrow at the suspension of a cherished project which I feared might never be resumed. " Be a good loser," he said—it was one of the many wise counsels he gave me which often recur to me in the inevitable casualties of life.†

* Reprinted in Chapter VII. of this book.

† Here is a letter which, as things turned out, was destined to be the epitaph on our collaboration—

" And now for your Article on my little volume of random musings. I have read, re-read, digested and noted it. I

There is one aspect of his career which requires delicate handling and which yet cannot be passed over in silence. I refer to his political ambition. The ascent to high office is, as Bacon has reminded us in that notable essay "Of Great Place," often "by a winding stair." And not only by a winding stair but sometimes by a secret one. Of one of his own colleagues Lord Morley himself quoted with scornful approval the criticism of Campbell-Bannerman, "he is always creeping in velvet slippers up the back stairs." Did Lord Morley himself never choose that tortuous mode of ascent? Was he as indifferent as he seemed to the arts by which men rise? Were there in his career no abjurations of early faiths? In politics men rise only too often to higher, but not greater, things "on their dead selves as stepping-stones" in a sense quite other than that which the poet of *In Memoriam* intended. This is a question which has to be faced. If Lord Morley's ban on biography had succeeded in silencing all posthumous criticism, the matter

only think myself unlucky in not having read your piece before I printed my own book. It would have been a far worthier performance. I expect that some day we may come back to the same ground, and then what you say will press me along. Meanwhile, I owe you my warmest thanks, not only for the trouble of writing the article but for the encouragement without which the little volume would never have gone to the printers. The breadth and compass of your criticisms, and that you were brought into so wide a field by my small book will [be] in itself no second-hand testimonial, you being known for entire competence in the range of its matter. Your pages abound in Actonian *dicta*. . . . Your familiarity with the 'decided cases' of the day is a great advantage. The ordinary reader and journalistic writer misses these important things. Haldane has read your article with much interest. . . . I recognize 'Ulysses' on the last page, but do not recall the poet on p. 551?" (March 1, 1914).

might be left where it was. Immediately on his decease there appeared a number of graceful elegiac tributes from those who had known him well, notably from Mr. Birrell and Mr. J. A. Spender—and their tone was, as one would expect it to be under the first impact of a bereavement so intolerable, tender to the point of indulgence. But in no long time the critics appeared on the scene, as was perhaps inevitable, and they have not spared him. One writer in the *Evening Standard* has, with some asperity, declared, in so many words, that there was an obvious reason for Lord Morley's injunction to his executors, and that was that a faithful biography would have been a record of intrigue for high place not a whit more alluring than the biography of any other politician. Not to be outdone in the rôle of *advocatus diaboli*, Mr. Bodley, in an extraordinary article in the *Times* of December 31, 1923, subsequently informed the world that Lord Morley had no historic sense, did not understand " the French spirit "—whatever that may mean—and, so far from being " honest," was better described as " lucky and astute."

Let us consider all this. Lord Morley's claims on posterity as a historian and man of letters I will not discuss here—I have done it already in the *Times Literary Supplement*,* and I see no reason to qualify anything that I have said therein as to his distinction in those fields of human endeavour. One will want better evidence to disestablish his fame as an historical writer than a single slip in a

* The article in question is reprinted as Chapter IV. of this book.

House of Lords' debate, which any septuagenarian might have made, as to the historical *locus in quo* of the " Day of Dupes." Professor Gardiner praised his *Oliver Cromwell*, and praise from Gardiner, *il maestro di color' che sanno*, for a book dealing with the seventeenth century is good enough for most intelligent people. Of Lord Morley's critical writings about French Literature, Faguet and Brunetière, whose claims to judge are indisputable, spoke highly, and it will be long before the volumes on Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot are displaced. But when it comes to the question of his political career Lord Morley's critics are on much stronger ground. To some extent Lord Morley inculpated himself. His *Recollections*, when they appeared, were a positive stumbling-block to certain of his more uncritical admirers. One of them, Mr. William O'Brien, in a remarkable article which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* for January 1918, gave expression to this consternation in words which were not more sorrowful than ironical. For years he had worshipped Lord Morley as a god, and behold ! he was but a man and politically not without sin.

The truth is, there is a want of perspective about all this criticism. The whole trouble originates in a fatal adjective which dogged Lord Morley like his own shadow—" honest John." It was not of his seeking. He was not his own political godfather, and he had no more to do with the choice of the adjective than of the baptismal name. I am not sure that he did not resent it. An " honest " politician is almost

as much a *lusus naturæ* as a Virgin Mother, and there is point in Pater's shrewd criticism of Botticelli's Madonnas that each of them "seems to wear a somewhat peevish expression as though she resented the intolerable honour thrust upon her." Hence, perhaps, a certain peevishness, assuredly a certain impatience, on Lord Morley's part when you talked about "honesty" in politics. Perhaps he was thinking of that intolerable adjective and wondering whether you expected him to live up to it. No one, as will be seen in the conversations which follow, was more emphatic in disclaiming the identification of public with private morality, or in repudiating attempts to erect a common standard for the two. "Did you ever know a Cabinet meeting," Mr. Birrell asked of him one day at Flowermead, "where any one discussed a political question *as a Christian?*" To which he replied with great emphasis, "No, not even Mr. G." It must be counted to him for righteousness that he was singularly free from cant in this respect, and I fancy that the repeated emphasis which he laid on "expediency," as opposed to right, as a test of political action, was, in its way, an impersonal repudiation of any claim to moral superiority over his fellows. If he had been such a charlatan as many politicians are, he would, no doubt, have made the attempt to appear what the public seemed to expect him to be, but his was too fine a temper for that. To judge Lord Morley by ethical tests to which he refused to subscribe, is to judge him by tests which are unfair and, in his political career, irrelevant. He was no worse

than other politicians, and in some respects he was a great deal better—he made certain notable stands for principle on the Eight Hours' Day, his opposition to which cost him his seat, as he knew it would, and equally on the annexation of the Boer Republics. To say that his political career will not always stand the inflexible moral tests of his essay on Compromise is true enough, but it has to be remembered that he wrote that denunciation of political casuistry long before he entered politics, and, having once entered them, made no pretence of applying its precepts to a world in which, by that time, he had found that they had, and could have, little place. If there is tragedy here, it is the tragedy of a man who in middle age exchanges his own vocation for another which is both new and alien to him.

Politics, he once wrote in an indiscreet moment, are neither a science nor an art, but a "dodge." Certain chapters in his *Recollections* afford only too many illustrations, in his own career, of that candid aphorism. Therein he appears as busy as any other politician in political tactics—the redrafting of Mr. Gladstone's famous ultimatum to the hapless Parnell, the hustling of Mr. Gladstone into resignation, the manœuvring of Harcourt out of the political succession—of which more in a moment, the determination to stay behind in the Cabinet ostensibly in the cause of Home Rule rather than leave it with Mr. Gladstone in the cause of naval retrenchment. *Litera scripta manet*—there is no getting away from these things. When the book appeared, Lord Morley, who made me a present of the two volumes with an inscription

truly Victorian in its tributary elaborateness, was anxious that I should review it, which I duly did with considerable "economies" of criticism, divided as I was between the desire to please and the duty to be candid. The review satisfied Lord Morley, but was far from satisfying me, and Lord Rosebery saw through it, for he wrote congratulating me—not, I suspect, without irony—on "a skilful tight-rope performance." It is possible to be less acrobatic now and to admit straightaway that Lord Morley was not less ambitious of high place than his colleagues, and not less busy, at critical moments, in the pursuing of it. Only a very simple soul will be surprised at this. "Philanthropical Radicals" may love their species without ceasing to love themselves. He was certainly, as Mr. Birrell has hinted, extremely sensitive to questions of personal precedence, and saw no reason to be content with the hard saying that the last shall be first. Who, indeed, among politicans can cast a stone at him? As he has himself most justly written, "it is always the most difficult thing in the world to draw a line between arrogant egoism on the one hand, and on the other the identification of a man's personal elevation with the success of his public cause. The two ends probably become mixed in his mind, and if the cause be a good one, it is the height of pharisaical folly to quarrel with him because he desires that his authority and renown shall receive some of the lustre of a far-shining triumph." * Most assuredly he never stooped to those arts, so common of late,

* *Miscellanies*, vol. i. p. 99.

by which politicians pose, both physically and mentally, for the Press like any lady of the chorus; "stage" receptions of their own devising on railway platforms; invite interviews; coquet with newspapers, and run a "Publicity" agent like the stars of the theatrical firmament. His fastidious temperament was proof against anything so vulgar. Nor need it be so much as said, for no one has ever questioned it, that he was absolutely incorruptible. The breath of financial scandal never touched him. But, as he once confessed to Sir Algernon West, he did not like "playing second fiddle" to any one —it was the baton of the political orchestra that he coveted.

This is the explanation, it may be, of certain incidents which have greatly puzzled many people, in particular his throwing his weight into the scale against Harcourt in favour of Lord Rosebery when it came to the choice of Gladstone's successor. He and Harcourt had been close friends, their friendship darkened by many quarrels, for both were quick-tempered, and illuminated by as many reconciliations. Harcourt had a sarcastic tongue. Sir F. Mowatt once told me that, on hearing that Morley was to write the "Life" of Gladstone, Harcourt accosted himwith the remark, "So you're going to write Mr. G.'s 'Life.' An excellent choice! There's no man better qualified than you, except, of course, on the religious question—you mustn't touch that; or his financial policy—you don't understand finance; or Home Rule—you've got a bee in your bonnet about that." No doubt Lord Morley, as Mr. Gardiner says in another connection,

"winced and remembered"; but such things—and this incident occurred, of course, long after Gladstone's resignation—had nothing to do with Lord Morley's election for Rosebery. What was it? Two notable political biographies have recently appeared dealing with the careers of Liberal statesmen, Harcourt and Campbell-Bannerman, careers of which Lord Morley might legitimately have said, "Quorum pars magna fui." Both biographers have done their work admirably and with a high conscientiousness—Mr. Spender, the most upright, discreet and equable of men and now the Nestor of Liberal journalism; Mr. Gardiner, brilliant, persuasive, and a master of the art of literary portraiture. Both men, like Chaucer, have left this part of their tale "half-told," for reasons of which they are the best judge, but Mr. Gardiner has let in daylight in a discreet footnote * about the office of Foreign Secretary. The truth appears to be that Lord Morley wanted it. Sir Algernon West, who knew more than most of what was going on behind the scenes, has said as much, and there is confirmation of it from one of Lord Morley's oldest friends. There were few high offices of State to which he did not at one time or another aspire. Indeed, why not? He had great abilities, and, like most men, was conscious of them without being conscious of his limitations. And there one may leave the matter, for no good would be done by enlarging on it.

To some all this will seem not a little tragic, and perhaps it was. There never was a man more

* *The Life of Sir William Harcourt*, vol. ii. p. 269, *note*.

honest in his private life, and there can have been few more magnanimous ; if that story were ever told, which it never will be, it would be a tale of singular devotion, a tale of one whose whole life was a noble comment on the text, " Bear ye one another's burdens," and who, living, fulfilled the law of Christ. But it is given to few honest men, if any, to succeed in politics without pledging much that they hold most dear, and those pledges are rarely redeemed. Lord Morley knew it, and, knowing it, was not altogether happy. There was not merely what I have called in this chapter the fundamental contradiction of two vocations ; there was the fundamental contradiction of the moralist who found himself a politician. Mr. Gardiner, with great acumen, has somewhere remarked that Lord Morley's place in politics should never have been on the front bench, indicating that he would have occupied a position of no less distinction and of higher achievement had he been content like Cobden to preserve the moral independence of a " private member " in the days when such independence was not the fiction which it is now. Had he made that election, he might have been a great tribune of the people. No one who ever heard him on the platform, away from all the cabals of Downing Street and Parliament Street, addressing a North-country audience of miners and railwaymen, could doubt it. Those honest souls, whose daily life is one long soul struggle with hard industrial realities, recognized in him at such times a kindred spirit. There was an unstudied downrightness of speech on such

occasions which was strangely moving, and was emphasized, rather than attenuated, by the awkward gestures, the husky voice, the ragged sentence —in strange contrast to the polish of his literary style, for he was an orator *malgré lui*—all of them leaving on the mind of the hearer the impression that he was wrestling with his very soul, as perhaps indeed he was.

In the arts of the demagogue he had no proficiency and never sought to acquire any. He disdained them. He has remarked in his "Life" of Cobden that the great danger of a platform orator's career is that it may in time "lessen a man's moral self-possession." "Effect becomes the decisive consideration instead of truth; a good meeting grows into a final object in a life; the end of existence is a paradise of loud and prolonged cheering; and character is destroyed by the parasites of self-consciousness and vanity." This was never more true than now, when political meetings resemble nothing so much as a circus, and clowning is one of the recognized arts of the successful platform politician. It was not Lord Morley's way. No such vulgar echoes of vulgar efforts as "Rub it in," "Give it him," and such-like ecstasies, ever came back to him from the auditorium. Irony, wit, and a certain impersonal humour—all these he had and could employ with trenchant, if sparing, effect, but buffoonery never. He spoke as he wrote—not indeed with the same finish, but with dignity, decorum, a high seriousness, and his speech was a well of English undefiled. In these things, with what measure ye mete it

shall be measured unto you. A flippant speaker will get, and deserve, a flippant audience; a serious speaker will achieve a serious one. And John Morley was a great platform force, in spite of many oratorical deficiencies, because his audience intuitively recognized in him the moral earnestness of the man.

He had the utmost contempt for the art of studying appearances and for the tricks by which public men catch the limelight. I doubt if he ever gave an "interview" in his life, and the occasions on which he "posed" for a photograph in public, if such occasions ever occurred, must have been rare indeed—he hated these things. I recall a political dinner in my undergraduate days at Oxford at which an enterprising photographer took a "flashlight" picture of him without his foreknowledge or consent; the explosion of the magnesium was nothing to the explosion of wrath that followed it.

In congenial society he unbent and became what he was in his own home—the most urbane and delightful of companions. The years brought their honours with them, and he became an honorary member of the "Senior," a Bencher of Lincoln's Inn, and an honorary Fellow of All Souls', in all of which he took great delight, especially the last. In such distinguished συσσῖτία he was at home. He shone in society not because he cultivated the social arts of pleasing but because Nature had set upon him her own hall-mark of distinction, and only the most obtuse could fail to recognize it. A distinguished lady, one of the last of the *grandes*

dames of the Victorian Age and happily still among us, remarked to me lately: "He always listened to one as if what one had to say was of supreme importance, but when there was no occasion to listen there was a far-away look in his eyes as though he could see something that was invisible to all the rest of us." It is felicitously said. He was what he has said of Mr. Gladstone, "at heart a solitary man," with the solitude of a mind

"Voyaging through strange seas of thought alone."

And at the same time a most courteous one, with that exquisite courtesy which one sometimes thinks was the secret of the Victorian Age and has perished with it. When he held the seals of Secretary of State for India, a certain member of the Eighty Club, who might not inaptly be called a lineal descendant of Mr. Tadpole or Mr. Taper, equally obscure and self-important, called on him, with another member of the Club, to fix a political appointment. Which being done, the visitor proceeded to inflict on Lord Morley at great length his views as to how India should be governed, entirely indifferent to the pile of State papers awaiting the Minister's attention upon his desk. With great patience and marked attention Lord Morley listened to the flow of platitudes until, taking advantage of a pause of his interlocutor to recover breath, he held out his hand and said politely, "I thank you, Mr. —— but I feel I have no right to occupy any more of your valuable time."

When all is said, the fact remains that Lord

Morley's anxiety to repudiate the epithet of "honest" proves how honest he was. The average politician usually preaches a virtue he never practises; Lord Morley was always labouring to practise a virtue he never preached. One should be as suspicious of a public man who airs his honesty as of a woman who advertizes her virtue. The true saint is he who is never quite certain he is saved. Hence Lord Morley's recurrent doubts and besetting fears. His frequent resignations were not outbursts of petulance but acts of penance. Only that disagreeable person, a confirmed cynic, will misunderstand them. They were a proof, if proof were needed, that the subject of them, unlike so many others, never allowed politics to blunt his moral sense. As Cobden said of Gladstone, he "had a conscience, which is at times a troublesome partner for a Cabinet Minister." * For such as they the crown of office is, indeed, a crown of thorns, and the path of triumph a *via dolorosa* watered with many penitential tears. But by such tears is the soul of man saved from perdition.

"Per una lagrimetta che il mi toglie."

He was often unwise in small things, never in great ones, unwise in those small things where, as it has been well said, "a certain mediocrity of mind helps to make a man wise." If he wanted high office, he said so, whereas a cunning man

* See Lord Morley's very interesting discussion of Cobden's refusal to take office, and his justification of that refusal, in the *Life of Cobden*, chapter xxvi.

would have procured some one else to say it for him, would have " inspired " an editorial nomination, done a " deal " with a colleague, given a nod here and a wink there, proclaiming all the while that there was nothing he desired so little. " Astute " is the very last word to apply to him ; he was in all these things almost naïve, because he was the soul of sincerity and never could be anything else. Of all affectations the one he could tolerate least was the habit, the " cant " * as he has called it, of public men out of office pretending that the last thing they desire is to reach it or to return to it. On my telling him that a certain former colleague of his, with whom I had dined when home on leave, had told me that the last thing he desired was to return to office, he raised his eyebrows with a quizzical expression, which was a characteristic trick of his, and said, " *Did* he tell you that ? " " Yes," I replied, " he told it me at least half a dozen times in one evening." " Well," came the slow, biting comment, " when a man tells you half a dozen times in the same evening that there is nothing he desires so little as a certain thing, you may be sure there is nothing he desires so much."

In all this he was " like a star and dwelt apart." He was often rash where cunning and inferior men would have been circumspect. The ignoble motto of " Safety first " had, in the sphere of conduct, no attractions for him ; he loved audacity—he has exalted it ; he had practised it, and he more than once took his political life in his hands. The

* *Gladstone*, i. 554 (two-volume edition).

public view of him as a great moralist in politics was, in spite of his repudiation of the distinction, on the whole sound. In a Ministry he was like Hamlet fallen among a conventicle of all the sons of Polonius, and like Hamlet he stood apart from his colleagues, brooding, solitary, scrupulous and passionate, flashing out the most disconcerting and often the most tragic of truths. The Prince of Denmark was not more discomposing, nor was Cato more august.

CHAPTER III

CAUSERIES

In his retirement Lord Morley watched the play of politics with a keen and critical eye, appraising politicians and parties with the skill of one who was unquestionably a shrewd judge of men. Of his old Liberal colleagues he saw but little, except for the one previously mentioned, but there was another for whom he had a great admiration and something very like affection—Mr. Churchill. He told me of the immense impression he had made upon all present by his first speech on the Mediterranean question at the Committee of Imperial Defence when he became First Lord of Admiralty.

"I foresee the day," he said to me on December 22, 1921, "when Birkenhead will be Prime Minister in the Lords with Winston leading the Commons. They will make a formidable pair. Winston tells me Birkenhead has the best brain in England. . . . But I don't like Winston's habit of writing articles, as a Minister, on debatable questions of foreign policy in the newspapers. These allocutions of his are contrary to all Cabinet principles. Mr. G. would never have allowed it."

He was most eclectic in his friendships. Their

number was not large but their variety was great. They were indeed the trophies of a discerning spirit, and one might apply to him the words of Pascal, "A mesure qu'on a plus d'esprit, on trouve qu'il y a plus d'hommes originaux ; les gens du commun ne trouvent pas de différence entre les hommes." Outside the inner circle of his friends there were many acquaintances, for no Delphic oracle was ever more visited and consulted than the sage of Flowermead in his old age. Thither, in the years immediately following the War, Lord Haldane brought his new political friends. Of Lord Haldane's political conversion Lord Morley sometimes said rather satirical things ; if he did not regard him as living in sin he was very far from looking upon his new state as a state of grace. The political débutants whom Lord Haldane chaperoned on their visits to Flowermead were not always a success. "Clever fellows," he once remarked to me of these "Labour" protagonists, "*but they don't know the A B C of Government.*" His estimates varied according to the type. He, who had known Thomas Burt and the hardy toilers of the North, liked and respected a real working-man, but of the "intellectuals" he was much more critical, as might be expected from one who hated a doctrinaire. Of Mr. Smillie he said, "A fine fellow, that" ; but the chief doctrinaire he characterized as "a clever little man"—and "clever" was not a compliment on Lord Morley's lips, adding on another occasion, "I cannot make out what anyone can see in him." Lord Morley had both too acute a sense of humour and too

keen a sense of realities to take very seriously a man who, with all the solemnity of Moses upon Sinai, had attempted to present the English people with a new constitution of his own devising; he hated such presumptuous pedantries. But of Mr Ramsay MacDonald he had quite another opinion. Mr. MacDonald had come to consult me on February 4, 1914, at my chambers about the legal aspects of Smuts' and Botha's drastic deportation of the South African labour leaders, in regard to which he was drafting an amendment to the Address, and, on seeing Lord Morley shortly afterwards, I asked him what he thought of him. He paid him a high tribute. "Ramsay MacDonald," he said, "has a front-bench mind. Years ago I tried to get him taken into the Ministry, but others thought otherwise." From which one may infer that—at that time—he looked upon Mr. MacDonald as more of a Liberal than a Socialist.

As early as 1918 he saw the new political cloud, then no bigger than a man's hand, upon the horizon, and often discussed it with Lord Bryce, whose interest in "Politics," in the Aristotelian sense of the word, was not less insatiable than his own. Here is an illuminating extract from a conversation in the early days of 1918.

J. H. M.: I walked home with Bryce from the Fred Pollocks' the other night. He tells me he is going to write three books, any one of which might tax the energies of a man of thirty—*Justinian*, *Federalism*, and *Modern Democracy*, beginning with the last.

LORD MORLEY: Yes, and he's got prophetic visions about democracy. He has just been telling me that in the next Parliament the Labour party will be strong but just short of a majority; in the next after that a "majority"—then a violent reaction and a coalition.

He was often critical about Labour policy, "Have you read Henderson's speech about a capital levy?" he asked me. "It's rank piracy." The sacerdotal airs of some of the Labour leaders, in other words their dogmatic pretensions, rather irritated such a hater of dogma, and he listened with keen enjoyment to a friend's description of one of them: "When Henderson utters the word 'Labour' he lowers his voice as if he were assisting at the Elevation of the Host." And here is an example of his going to the root of things:

LORD MORLEY: I've been reading the Hammonds' book. They regard the Factory System as having converted the working man from a free craftsman into a serf.

J. H. M.: Yes, that is true enough of the time of the Industrial Revolution and long after, but to-day with the abolition of the laws against combination, with limitation of output and restriction of apprenticeship in the skilled trades, the workman is more of an autocrat than a serf. He is certainly better off than he ever has been before.

LORD MORLEY: How better off?

J. H. M.: Financially.

LORD MORLEY: Yes, *but is he a better man than he was?* Does he care about the things of the mind? How do he and his wife spend their money?

On vain pleasures—his wife on meretricious finery, himself on betting (December 21, 1919).

On looking through my diaries with their records of conversations *à deux*, written down within a few hours of the event, I find the lodes of ore so full of the precious metal of his mind that the only difficulty is to know where to stop, for the yield is almost inexhaustible. There are records of many conversations on Women in general, and on Mrs. Asquith and others in particular, on Field Sports, on Capital Punishment, on Oratory, on public morality, on Ireland, a subject to which he always returned, on Modern Democracy, on India, and a hundred other things. But exigencies of space, and, in some cases, personal considerations, compel me to omit these things and pass on to those conversations on life and literature which will serve to show the catholic quality of his mind. These colloquies will be found discursive and at times elusive as all good conversation is—I make no attempt to " edit " them. A true conversation is not like a Platonic dialogue, which is such a thing of art that the end is always implicit in the beginning and the talk is conducted as in a conduit-pipe towards a carefully appointed conclusion—the mental current of thought is never vagrant and rarely obscure. But the talk of ordinary life does not follow the rules of the grove of Academus. It has all the vagrancy of a stream in which deep pools alternate with murmuring ripples, there is a play of light and shade, the course is now slow, now rapid, and sometimes itself divides into two streams, one flowing along the surface in open

talk, the other losing itself for a time in the underground of sub-consciousness until it rejoins the main stream of conversation and gives it a new direction. One of the interlocutors may make a remark which the other, intent on his own process of thought, may appear not even to hear or may seem to ignore, only to return to it later with a sudden *riposte*. The process is not logic nor is the result art; but it is in such unstudied self-expression that you find the man.

I reproduce some of the conversations with as little comment as may be, leaving the reader, if he be so minded, to discover the train of association of ideas for himself.

LORD MORLEY: I was intrigued by your reference to Burke's saying about the trivial things such as "a face at an inn" which "change the face of history." I've been hunting for the *locus in quo*. Here it is in the *Letters on a Regicide Peace*. Was he referring to Peter the Great? But what a mind was Burke's! Macaulay was right, the greatest mind since Milton. . . . I don't like the Belgians. I don't know what Wellington thought of them. They were at Waterloo.

J. H. M.: Yes, but not longer than they could help.

LORD MORLEY: Ah! I never tire of reading of Waterloo.

J. H. M.: Then you remember Stendhal's description in the *Chartreuse de Parme?*

LORD MORLEY: No, I must look it up. You have quoted in your article Renan's prologue to his *Souvenirs de mon enfance*. It's one of the finest

things in French literature. I met him once. Do you like Hardy's *Dynasts?*

J. H. M.: Yes, I find the metre sometimes uncouth, but I like the magnitude of conception.

LORD MORLEY. *Uncouth* is the word. I "read" Hardy's first novel when he submitted it to the Macmillans, was impressed, but rejected it, and then got him to come and see me, and was the cause of his writing another and a better one. But I didn't like his hanging Tess. It was needlessly poignant, and I wrote and told him so.

J. H. M.: Mr. Hardy is one of those rare writers who never disappoint you when you meet them in the flesh. He has what Thucydides makes Pericles call "the simplicity of all noble natures."

LORD MORLEY: Yes. Meredith, too, perhaps. But Meredith was not simple. He was *striking* to meet, but not exactly charming. He was too hard for that. But Matthew Arnold had charm (February 15, 1918).

His admiration for Hardy, with whom he shared the distinction of being the last of the great Victorians, was whole-hearted and complete. "There is something Shakespearean about Hardy," was a frequent comment of his. On my leaving Flowermead one day for a visit to Max Gate, he said at parting, "Give Hardy my love," and of such greetings he was not prodigal. Another day we discussed the verdict of Time on the reputations of two great Victorians:

LORD MORLEY: What do you think of Carlyle?

J. H. M.: He lives as a great prose colourist.

Is not the Essay on History a wonderful piece of imaginative writing ?

LORD MORLEY : Yes, and the Essay on Burns.

J. H. M. : And on Johnson. Macaulay's essay on the same theme is vulgarity itself in comparison.

LORD MORLEY : As for Macaulay, Acton used to say the essays were already dead and that he was all wrong about Warren Hastings. Does his " history " stand the test of time ?

J. H. M. : Yes. Firth praises it, and he speaks with unimpeachable authority. Do you still read Burke ?

LORD MORLEY : Often. Perhaps his attitude on America stands in need of revision. You ought to write a book about him.

J. H. M. : No. I have not the courage to follow you.

LORD MORLEY : My little book was inadequate. He is a great theme. What a mind ! His fame grows greater with time. Macaulay was right when he said of certain passages, " How divine ! " Who can compare with him ? Taine ? Tocqueville ? No.

Of contemporary literature he read but little in his latter years. The discovery of a new " genius " every week in these days of loud advertisement left unmoved and incurious the man who had lived, moved, and had his being among the great minds of the Victorian age.

Of Mr. Gladstone, Lord Morley was, as might be expected, full of eloquent memories :

" I remember once staying at a country-house party at which Mr. G. and Huxley were two of the

guests. On Sunday Mr. G. went to church and we infidels stayed behind and discussed Mr. G. Some one raised the question how much a man owed in his career to environment, and instanced Mr. G. and what he owed to Eton and Christ Church. Huxley would have none of it. He said, 'Put him in the middle of a ploughed field with nothing but his shirt to cover him, and no power on earth could prevent that man becoming Prime Minister.'"

He was well aware of Mr. Gladstone's weaknesses and, not the least, his inveterate casuistry. When discussing the suffrage question in January 1913, and the Cabinet difficulties into which Mr. Asquith had got himself, he said, "Mr. G. would never have got himself into such a position—he would never have given an undertaking in which he could not discover, if need be, some *ambiguity* which permitted an escape. His mind was like that."

This was like an echo of his scathing criticism of Mr. Gladstone in the days before he knew him and when he was at war with him on the question of the endowment of Church schools out of the Education grant.*

A discussion of Mr. Lytton Strachey's monograph on "Queen Victoria" provoked the following:

Lord Morley: Rosebery doesn't like it. He

* Thus of one of Gladstone's arguments in this cause he wrote in 1873, "A poorer sophism was never coined, even in that busy mint of logical counterfeits."—*National Education*, p. 57.

thinks it too flippant. He has a *reverence* for Queen Victoria.

J. H. M.: So had Mr. Gladstone.

LORD MORLEY: No.

J. H. M.: Indeed! I thought that, as Burke said of Chatham, the "eyes of the eagle *blenched*" in that dazzling presence.

LORD MORLEY: You are much mistaken.

The following extract will offend only the prudish—it goes to show how little of a prude was the subject of this memoir:

J. H. M.: Have you read Mrs. O'Shea's book?

LORD MORLEY: No. I wouldn't touch it with a pair of tongs.

J. H. M.: Neither have I, but I wanted to ask you a question about it. She says that Mr. Gladstone telegraphed to Parnell on the day of the introduction of the Home Rule Bill to ask for an assurance of his support. Is that true?

LORD MORLEY: The story carries with it its own refutation on the face of it.

J. H. M.: She also says that Mr. Gladstone knew all along the nature of Parnell's relations with her.

LORD MORLEY: I dare say he did. Mr. G. was a man of the world. He knew that in politics you have to take men as you find them. I remember Lord Granville once said to me, "I have known five of Queen Victoria's Prime Ministers all of whom have committed adultery."

And he started guessing who they were. But that is another story. His views on public morality

as distinct from private morality—a distinction which he both accepted and enforced—were not in the least what the public have thought them to be. He was much more of a " realist " than is commonly supposed.

J. H. M. : Lord Fitzmaurice told me a curious story about Disraeli the other say—very characteristic, I thought. He said that years after his shabby treatment of Peel he took one of Peel's daughters in to dinner. Disraeli began in a tone of tender and respectful reminiscence of her father. This was too much for the daughter, who, with great spirit, replied, " I wonder you can talk of my father like that after the way you treated him." Disraeli showed his usual effrontery and replied, " My dear lady, I was young—I had to get on." And look at his stolen eloquence—his theft of another man's speech. He was mean.

Lord Morley : These are small things. Why do people always talk as if a politician was to be so much better than other men in other professions ?

J. H. M. : But he was an adventurer. Birrell hit it off the other day ; he told me Disraeli's career was " all picaresque."

Lord Morley : I don't agree. He was a great statesman. Look at his vision of democracy, his Reform Bill, his views on the American Civil War. And look at his courage ! His speech vindicating the Jews—Lord John Russell sat opposite during its delivery, and turned to his neighbours on the Front Bench and said, " What courage ! There is not a man on the Tory benches around him but doesn't disapprove of every word he says."

The talk of this occasion (June 29, 1913) then

diverted from Disraeli to Cavour, from Cavour to Bismarck, each of whom he praised in turn, the last at the expense of Napoleon.

LORD MORLEY : Bismarck's work lasts—unlike Napoleon's.

J. H. M. : But *will* it last ? Look at the growing social discontent in Germany.

LORD MORLEY : Yes, but the Socialists always come to heel. So long as France is hostile, it will always be so.

And thence to Goethe :

LORD MORLEY : Mill always said Schiller was a greater poet than Goethe.

J. H. M. : But Schiller never wrote a lyric that could be compared with *Uber allen Gipfeln*.

LORD MORLEY : No, but Mill's mind was biased by an austere temper. He disliked Goethe because of his amorous adventures.

And from Goethe to Machiavelli :

J. H. M. : Everybody talks of the *Prince*, but how few people seem to know the *Discorsi*, and they are far more interesting !

LORD MORLEY : So they are. A good book on Machiavelli has yet to be written. My essay is too slight, and Acton thought it too rhetorical. The best thing yet written in Italian is Tommasini.

J. H. M. : Acton's learning is almost overwhelming, and the worst of it is he rarely had it under control except in his inaugural lecture.

LORD MORLEY : Ah, but his outlook was so fresh, his mind so full. If the gods granted me the

privilege of recalling to life for half an hour's conversation some of the great men of the past I have had the good fortune to know, I should say Acton.

J. H. M. : Mrs. Asquith told me the other day that she once belittled Acton to Mr. Gladstone and said, " I'll bet you he hasn't read Purcell's *Life of Manning*." And she added gleefully, " And he hadn't ! "

LORD MORLEY : She told you that ! That is *my* story. It was to Mr. G. and myself that Acton confessed that he hadn't read the book.

J. H. M. : Well, there are worse things than having " one's " stories " cribbed." One is to have one's epigrams appropriated. I once wrote in the *Westminster* that Irish history is a thing for Irishmen to forget and for Englishmen to remember. I cast it forth like bread upon the waters, and years later I saw it ascribed to Horace Plunkett.

LORD MORLEY : Never mind that. It happens to all of us. Some one appropriated my phrase about a scheme for reconstituting the House of Lords from ex-Cabinet Ministers as being a device for making use of " scrapped Dreadnoughts " as political targets to fire at. It was I who said it.

He had known Clémenceau well. I found it a common bond of conversation when I met the great French statesman in Paris. Lord Morley recalled a curious comment of Chamberlain's after he had brought him and Clémenceau together thirty years earlier at a lunch at the Café Anglais :

" As we came away, Joe said to me, ' A fine fellow that Clémenceau ! If he and I joined hands

we could establish Radicalism in Europe.' But I doubt if they meant the same things."

In 1919 Lord Morley and Clémenceau met again after many years at Lord Curzon's—I think in the second week in December.

" Clémenceau said to me, ' I used to be an idealist, but the older I grow the more I am convinced that it is Force that counts.' I replied," added Lord Morley as he narrated the encounter to me, " ' Then you have come to agree with Machiavelli ? ' But Clémenceau doesn't like having his conclusions sharpened, and he said nothing."

Lord Morley's question to Clémenceau might have been addressed to the questioner except that he also did not like having his conclusions sharpened. When I asked him in 1919 what he thought of the Covenant of the League of Nations, he answered, " I have not read it, and I don't intend to read it. It's not worth the paper it's written on. To the end of time it'll always be a case of ' Thy head or my head.' I've no faith in these schemes." I wrote to him frequently from Paris of the doings of the Peace Conference of which, as A.A.G. in the Military Section, I had an inside view—he was eager for information and pessimistic, as the following letter will show :

" Your letter of April 26 fills me with interest and stirs the liveliest curiosity. How can I repay ? Assuredly not by writing you a letter that would be as empty and void of news or knowledge with observation at the back of it, as yours is replenished

from all those vitalizing sources. One great ray of light I think upon with good hope. You speak of a visit to London in a few days from now. You would most certainly find me at home, and I should vastly prize any chance that you might give me of hearing further what you have to say—which cannot be little—about the raging whirlpool which the foolish assume to be running dry."

To this theme of the makeshifts of men to establish peace on earth he often returned. Thus, on February 15, 1918:

"I'm sick of Wilson . . . He hailed the Russian Revolution six months ago as the new Golden Age, and I said to Page, 'What does he know of Russia?' to which Page replied, 'Nothing.' As for his talk about a union of hearts after the war, *the world is not made like that*."

Whereupon I asked him what he thought of the League of Nations:

LORD MORLEY: A mirage, and an old one.

J. H. M.: Yes, it began with Sully and has been the illusion of three centuries. How are you going to enforce it?

LORD MORLEY: How indeed? One may as well talk of London morality being due to the Archbishop of Canterbury. But take away Scotland Yard!

And from thence the talk diverged to what terms the Allies, if victorious, might impose, but the conversation is too long to be reproduced here. His views on European problems were always objective,

" realistic," and empirical. He hated catchwords like the plague. When a certain well-known Liberal of the academic type praised a certain public man as " a good European," he dryly observed : " When I lay me down at night or rise in the morning I do not ask myself if I am a good European."

At the end of 1919 he was very concerned about the guarantees to France :

" Surely a permanent commitment like that is contrary to all our foreign policy. What do the words ' unprovoked attack ' by Germany mean ? They are dangerously vague. I've been discussing them with Rosebery and he is as uneasy as I am. He wrote a letter to the Press about it, and the *Times* refused to publish it."

On that occasion our talk veered round to literature, as it generally did, and particularly to French writers.

LORD MORLEY : Renan's style is truly French. But what variety there is ! Hugo's style is an utterly different thing from Voltaire's.

J. H. M. : Yes, Voltaire wrote with the point of a stiletto, Hugo with a brush. Hugo's prose is often formless and rhetorical.

LORD MORLEY : Yes, but he was greatest when he *smelt the sea*. Look at the *Travailleurs de la Mer*. Taine would have appealed to you. I knew him. I knew them nearly all except Sainte-Beuve.

J. H. M. : Of all the French writers of the later generation I should have liked most to know Sorel.

LORD MORLEY : There I agree with you. I

once discussed Guizot and Thiers with Clémenceau. I quoted Mr. G., who placed Guizot higher. Clémenceau said, " No. Thiers was a statesman." And so I think.

We had a piquant and discursive talk on July 30, 1920, about the morality of politics.

J. H. M. : Don't you think politics often works a corruption in the soul ?

Lord Morley : It didn't in Mr. G.

J. H. M. : But he was a casuist.

Lord Morley : Yes. But what about the Army ? Do you like being in it ?

J. H. M. : Yes.

Lord Morley : Why ?

J. H. M. : Because it is what de Vigny said it was—" un bon livre pour connaître l'humanité."

Lord Morley : But why did you say that politics works a corruption in the soul ? What about lawyers ? Don't they argue a case in which they don't believe by evidence of which they are not convinced ? What about men in business ?

J. H. M. : Yes, but in politics there's too much make-believe. A lawyer doesn't pretend he's doing it except for his fee, a business man makes no pretence that he is not out for profit. In politics alone does a man profess to be seeking the good of the human race. Bright and Cobden were exceptions.

Lord Morley : Yes, but in Bright there was an unlimited self-confidence which amounted to corruption of the soul.

J. H. M. : Say rather, then, that he was a prig. What *is* a prig ? Mr. Balfour once told me it was a man who paraded a commonplace morality.

LORD MORLEY: Well, that is one definition. But tell me what do you think of Foch? Have you met him?

J. H. M.: Yes, when I worked with General Weygand. Weygand told me that Foch once concluded a course at the *École de Guerre* with the words to his students, "Gentlemen, learn to think."

LORD MORLEY: But surely that's the last thing a soldier should do. I can't imagine a commanding officer saying that to his troops.

J. H. M.: But these were staff officers.

LORD MORLEY: Even so, I can't imagine Napoleon saying it. *No! and I wouldn't say it to electors.* I believe in the *regiments* of parties. I don't like that hateful heresy, proportional representation.

J. H. M.: That sounds very like the doctrine of authority.

LORD MORLEY: Well, why not? One must govern. I see the *Manchester Guardian* has quoted a remark of mine to Minto—in the second volume of my *Recollections*—when I said "if any servant of the Government threatens that if his advice is not followed he will resign, tell him that his resignation will be accepted." That remark of mine had reference to Kitchener. He had told Minto, when I became S. of S., that he hoped we should work harmoniously, but if his advice wasn't accepted he would resign. And I told Minto to tell him that if he did resign, he would not be asked to reconsider it. K. of K. hoped to be Viceroy, but I wouldn't hear of it. I appointed Hardinge. King Edward was for Lord Kitchener, and urged against Hardinge that a man should always stick to his last—that he was a diplomatist, not an administrator.

He had read so much of Irish history that he was almost haunted, as well a reader might be, by a conviction of England's responsibility for Ireland. On January 27, 1913, Mr. Birrell had given a private dinner-party at the House to the Ministers immediately associated with the passage of the Home Rule Bill, the Prime Minister, the Law Officers of the Crown, Mr. Herbert Samuel, and to one or two of us outside the House who had been indirectly associated ; the remarkable thing was the presence of Irish M.P.'s—Mr. Redmond, Mr. John Dillon, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor. In his after-dinner speech, proposing Mr. Asquith's health (to which Mr. Asquith replied in a speech of exactly three words), Dillon had emphasized this aspect of the matter and said it was the first time Irish Nationalist M.P.'s had sat at meat with English Cabinet Ministers. None of them, he added, would have dared to do it before. I repeated this to Lord Morley a few days afterwards, whereupon he remarked :

" But that's not correct—they've dined with *me*. And very good company they are. ' T. P. ' is one of the best talkers in London."

J. H. M. : Yes. He too made a speech, or rather an allocution, about the Ireland of his boyhood. Witty and pathetic. He said an Englishman, rich and a Protestant, took the local mansion in his village when he was a boy. The villagers, who were Catholics to a man, sat round their peat-fires discussing the new arrival, the heretic's fine raiment, his hunters, his clothes, and his table. One of them said, " Yes, and he has

chops and steaks every morning for breakfast,'' at which, added T. P., there was a long pause of stupefaction, for none of them had ever tasted a chop or a steak in his life, and at last one of them said, " Ah, well, he has his heaven here below."

LORD MORLEY: A good story. But what a comment on the poverty of Ireland! And it's we who're responsible. She has been *so infernally bedevilled* by us that no Englishman can cast a stone at her.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that he did not realize the strength, certainly the conviction, of Ulster and her case. All through the year 1913–1914 he was very concerned about the state of Ireland. Unlike his colleagues, he took Ulster seriously. On December 22, 1913, he remarked to me " Ulster is in deadly earnest. The Liberal caucus at Leeds has had a deplorable effect on the P.M.; he's hardened ever since. Before that he was moving towards conciliation." In the following May he was more gloomy still—

" The Executive in Ireland is a broken reed. Dougherty is *passé* and wants to retire. The Law Officers were never so weak—this Larkin affair proves it. C—— at the head of the —— is a Unionist and disaffected; so is —— at the head of the ——. And what about the Government's position? I put it to you as a constitutional lawyer; if the amending bill is rejected, can they return to the position they have started from? Can they force the King to 'sign' the Home Rule Bill? Have they not confessed by their

amending bill that the original bill cannot stand? An election in July is inevitable."

But by July a dark and sinister cloud had appeared on the political horizon, and the world swung into a new orbit.

Here is an interesting, if discursive, conversation which took place during the course of the Peace Conference (May 6, 1919), ranging over the whole field of topics, domestic and foreign, which were then engaging the public eye. It commenced with a paternal catechism from Lord Morley as to my reasons for electing to stay on in the Army, which will be of no interest to the reader save for Lord Morley's *obiter dictum*: "there are three *castes* of which every man should learn something, the military, the parliamentary, and the legal—about the clerical I don't know." And thence to the issues of Peace and War—

LORD MORLEY: The ultimate end of government should be *Peace*. Tested by that, the Asquith Government failed. At the time of Agadir, the Kaiser had not wanted war. Our attitude helped to put the Junkers in the saddle. Weren't we as "Imperialist" as they? Didn't we attempt to give away what was not our own—the Portugese colonies? What of that letter of Sazonov's, written from Windsor Castle, in which our Government is represented as having agreed to support Russia against Germany?

And thence to domestic politics—

LORD MORLEY: I was going with a friend through the list of politicians of whom great things

might be expected. We could think of *none*—except Robert Cecil. But there's Herbert Fisher—an exceptionally fine mind. Who else? Liberalism, as we have known it, is dead beyond resurrection. Asquith should have stuck to the law. After all, law is the trade that matters most. He was meant to be Lord Chancellor, not Prime Minister. What do you think of Lloyd George and Winston?

J. H. M.: Both are strong-willed men. But whereas Churchill knows his own mind, Lloyd George is always more concerned to know the minds of other people.

Lord Morley: You've hit it. But Winston is reckless. . . . I see Lloyd George has invited the Irish *republicans* to a conference. It's an act of inconceivable folly—he, the King's Prime Minister! Why has he done it?

J. H. M.: Probably because he thinks he can solve all problems by the persuasion of an interview.

Lord Morley: Ah, yes. That reminds me of a story of Walter Long's. A South of Ireland Unionist had told him that if he could secure him an interview with Lloyd George, he thought he could convince Lloyd George of the soundness of the Unionist case. The interview took place, and the Unionist called on Walter Long after it was over and said it had been a great success—he had completely convinced "Ll. G." Ten minutes later Ll. G. rang up Long and said, "I've seen your friend, and I have completely converted him."

J. H. M.: What way out of the Irish impasse would you suggest?

Lord Morley: I would negative no solution.

J. H. M.: Hasn't the ruin of the Constitutional, in other words the Nationalist, party and the

triumph of the revolutionaries shaken your faith in Home Rule ?

LORD MORLEY : We've *got* to solve it. You can't ignore the fact of seventy M.P.'s all elected under your own system being opposed to your government. Could one apply the Canadian system to Ireland ?

J. H. M. : What ! Four provinces, four local legislatures and executives, four High Courts and a Supreme Court with power to declare their legislation *ultra vires !*

LORD MORLEY : No ! I see it's impossible.

Our talk of the desperate state of the Liberal party—at that time reduced by the election of 1918 to a mere fraction of the House—led him on to discuss the prospects of a Labour Ministry.

LORD MORLEY : The trouble is that they know nothing about *government*. Some of them I like. Smillie came to see me the other day—that man is a clear, powerful thinker who knows his own mind. Yet they remind me of the " National Workshops " of 1848 and Louis Blanc whom I met. Blanc thought of nothing but the ends of his own trade and class and never of the effect on the country. Smillie talked to me just as Louis Blanc talked to me—as if we were all coal-miners. . . . And the Webbs—clever and I should think disinterested, but—— !

J. H. M. : The Webbs are the idolaters of what they call " efficiency," which is merely a catch-word. Efficiency is a means, not an end.

LORD MORLEY : Yes, that's true. But it has its importance if you're merely concerned with oiling the wheels of administration. The Glad-

stonian generation, which was the object of my adoration, forgot it except in *finance*. Mr. G. made every department balance its accounts every week to the last farthing. There was no waste.

The talk diverged to oratory, and Lord Morley discussed Bright—

"I have been reading his speeches again," he said. "Do you remember that passage in his speech on the Crimean War in which he told his audience of how he had met an Army Officer near a London bookshop on the outbreak of war, an officer whom he knew and who said to him, "This is a bad business for me!" and Bright's mournful comment, "And now his wife is a widow, his children are fatherless, and he lies dead by the cold Euxine Sea?" What felicity in the local contrast! The familiar London book-shop and the homeless sea!"

But his favourite orator was Burke, whom he put above Bright, and, needless to say, above Gladstone, for it is rare to find Gladstone's speeches, with their innumerable parentheses and cunning economies, their somewhat colourless rhetoric and poverty of metaphor, exhibiting the qualities of a great prose style.* It is not irrelevant, and, I hope, not illegitimate, to cite here the opinion of another great Parliamentarian on political oratory —Mr. Balfour, as he then was—with whom I discussed the same subject at a dinner-party in Paris a few months later (August 31, 1919).

* One may make an exception in the case of his speech on the No Popery Bill with its magnificent eulogy of the English character (see Morley's *Gladstone*, 1905 edition, pp. 411–414).

J. H. M.: It seems to me that the literary permanence of oratory is in inverse ratio to its immediate oral effect. Gladstone crowded the House and is now almost unreadable; Burke emptied it and his speeches are immortal.

Mr. Balfour: "That's true, but there are two cases against you—Demosthenes and Cicero. Gladstone, I admit, I find unreadable. And I think Morley's *Life* of him dull—I put it down to Gladstone's being a dull writer. All good biographies are compounded of good letters and good conversations, Trevelyan's *Macaulay* and Boswell's *Johnson* for example. . . . As for Morley, he was never a good speaker, but he is a brilliant conversationalist. His fault in politics is that he's too negative."

I conclude these extracts with some notes of a conversation at a dinner-party at the National Liberal Club on November 22, 1912. It was a dinner I had given partly in his honour, partly in celebration of a book, in which many of my guests had collaborated, and which I had edited for the Eighty Club, on the New Irish Constitution. I had chosen the guests, to some extent, with an eye to the spiritual enjoyment of the chief of them, and was rewarded by seeing him expand in such congenial company. They were, indeed, nearly all of them men with whom, at one point or another, he had much in common. Pages of Irish history were represented by Lord Welby, a great authority on Home Rule Finance, Lord Macdonell, Mr. Birrell, and Mr. Barry O'Brien. Scholarship was represented by Sir John Macdonell, Sir Frederick

Pollock, and Mr. G. P. Gooch ; Liberal journalism by Mr. C. P. Scott. Lord Haldane was there, also the eminent Scottish divine, Dr. Alexander Whyte, and an alien phase of Liberal Imperialism was represented by that most charming and companionable of men, the late Bourchier Hawksley.

LORD MORLEY : You have read Machiavelli ?

J. H. M. : Yes, and Guicciardini. Do you remember his comment on Machiavelli's saying that all men are bad ? He says that all men are naturally good, but that they are naturally weak, and he establishes his point by saying that even a " bad " man always tries to find an excuse.

LORD MORLEY : I'd forgotten that. Where did he say it ?

J. H. M. : In his commentaries on the *Principe* and the *Discorsi*. Some one says—Villari, I think —that Machiavelli was the first person to perceive that public morality and private morality are two different things.

LORD MORLEY : Well, but so they are. Let us ask Haldane. Haldane, are public morality and private morality two different things ?

LORD HALDANE : Well . . . they should approximate.

LORD MORLEY : Did they approximate in Disraeli ?

J. H. M. : He hadn't the honesty of Mr. Gladstone.

LORD MORLEY : Well, but was Mr. G. always honest ?

J. H. M. : I admit his casuistry. But wasn't it an intellectual rather than a moral fault ? Didn't he convince himself that the course he sought was

the right one? Whereas Disraeli only sought to convince himself that it was a profitable one.

LORD MORLEY: That won't do. The Bessborough Commission on Irish Land Tenure reported in favour of the three F.'s. What did Mr. G. do? He denounced it in private as monstrously inequitable, and two months later he introduced a bill to that effect.

The rest is too long to quote.

Lord Morley had faults, in common with all the sons of men; he would not have been so intensely human if he had had them not. Most of these, such as his extreme sensitiveness, had a common source with his most lovable qualities, of which a tenderness passing the love of women was one. Human nature is a fallible and an imperfect thing, and the secret of character seems to be a Manichean mystery in which there can be no light without darkness, and the sources of a man's strength are also the sources of his weakness. The metaphysical problem of "Good" and "Evil" is not more mysterious.

He loved justice and hated iniquity. With some literary affection for the grand tyrants of history, he loathed contemporary tyranny. He was no austere rationalist, impatient of human emotion. Cruelty fired his blood like a taunt; pity informed his whole outlook on life. Carved in bold letters on the granite mantelpiece of his library were the words, "*The nobler a soul is, the more objects of Compassion it hath*," and that great saying of Bacon's was constantly on his lips. Like the Florentine poet, his ear was strangely sensitive to the plaintive

murmer of that river of human tears ' falling always in the shadows of the world.' No man knew better how to feel for human frailty and error. Hence a sympathy with his kind, almost feminine in its delicacy and more than masculine in its strength ; to many a wounded spirit did he bring words of assuagement and of peace. Of that " best portion of a good man's life " :

> " His little, nameless, unremembered acts
> Of kindness and of love,"

his share was large. No kinder heart nor one more sensitive ever sweetened the intercourse of life. If I had to choose any one word to express the quality of his soul, I should say it was loving-kindness.

His old age was a singularly peaceful and happy one, lightened as it was by the rare devotion and constant solicitude of his immediate relatives. When I last saw him, a few months before the end, a slow restful euthanasia seemed to be creeping over him, and as the shadows deepened he lived more and more in the past. His favourite books were constantly in his hands, but though his eyes were on the page his mind was often far away. " He thinks he reads much," were the words of one who was near and dear to him, " but in reality he reads very little." He forgot names and misplaced dates ; he spoke to me of his visit to Germany " in 1918."

But at eventide there shall be light. An infinite gentleness and a great patience diffused his being with the pale glow of resignation, as though nothing mattered very much. I well remember

one afternoon when, sitting together in his library in the deepening twilight of late October, we talked of the eternal mystery, and I quoted to him the lines of a favourite poet of his :

> " Illud ab hoc igitur quaerendum est, quid sit amari
> Tanto opere, ad somnum si res redit atque quietem
> Cur quisquam æterno possit tabescere luctu."

" But isn't it true ? " he replied, and, rising with an effort from the depths of the chair, he walked with faltering steps to a shelf, and taking down a well-loved volume, he read out the memorable words of the *Convito* wherein Dante speaks of death as the quiet haven in which the soul, like a good mariner, after long questing, makes safe anchor at last. There is much to quiet us in a death so noble.

CHAPTER IV

THE *COLLECTED WORKS*

THE fifteen volumes of Lord Morley's Collected Works are a record of a life of strenuous intellectual activity animated by a singular unity of purpose and ennobled by one constant ideal—a passion for Truth. As an expression of that ideal, the essay on Compromise is to his works as the keystone of the arch, a book which not merely defends the right but enforces the duty of Private Judgment in every sphere of thought and conduct. The inspiration of that famous little book, as indeed of all Lord Morley's books, might be found in that wise sentence of Pascal's: "On se persuade mieux pour l'ordinaire, par les raisons qu'on a soi-même trouvées, que par celles qui sont venues dans l'esprit des autres." It is this determination never to take anything on trust, and never to allow the imagination to seduce the reason, which not only explains the catholic variety of Lord Morley's choice of subjects, and his singularly impartial treatment of them, but is the secret of his style.

It is an austere style; it has more grace than charm, it diffuses light but it never generates heat. In this respect it is a true reflection of the writer's mind; he is a moralist whose passion for truth

makes him dispassionate to almost everything else, and it is characteristic of him that he emphasizes somewhere what he calls the " morality of style." He avoids rhetoric, for its toxic effect, as an athlete avoids strong drink. He has reproached Rousseau and Carlyle with their emotion as being a dispersal of energy that might have taken a more intellectual form. His style is almost the exact converse of Rousseau's ; as he thinks, so he writes, in concepts not in images, which, it may be remarked, places him far above Rousseau as a thinker though it depresses him below Rousseau as an imaginative writer. He has neither the colour of Burke, nor the poetry of Carlyle, nor the wistfulness of Newman ; he is rarely intimate like Browne, and never colloquial like Dryden, which is to say that he is the most impersonal of all our great writers of prose. It is the style of a man who has himself under perfect control, and to find an analogy one must turn to the great French writers, to Voltaire and to Renan—in other words to writers who, except in rare moments, used language not to express an individual emotion but as the instrument of a critical method. He is a master of the aphorism, the most impersonal of all forms of utterance and the most French ; and in reading him one is constantly arrested and enlightened by such things as : " Worshippers are ever dearer to us than their graven images " ; " we observe something almost theological in Condorcet's hatred of theologians " ; " a vast space has to be traversed by every ray of light before it reaches the eye of the common understanding " ; of Rousseau that " he loved men

most when he saw them least"; or, again, of Carlyle, that "his golden gospel of silence is effectively compressed into thirty volumes." On the other hand, there are not a few passages in his writings which suggest that this self-restraint, what Pater would call "the beauty of a frugal closeness of style," has only been attained by a deliberate literary asceticism, and that if he had liked—but he rarely likes—to yield to the enchantment of sense he might sound what stop he pleases. There are passages in his essay on Robespierre and in his *Cromwell* which have the colour, the movement, and the animation of a great master of narrative, and it may be said of him, in the words of Dryden, that he is always great when some great occasion is presented to him. Thus, of the death of Burke in the catastrophic days of 1797: "These sombre shadows were falling over the western world when a life went out which, notwithstanding some grave aberrations, had made great spaces in human destiny very luminous"—the image of the afterglow of transient mortality against the dark abyss of Time is not more admirable than the economy of effort by which it is conveyed. So, too, in the passage describing the last hours of Cromwell and the heavy travail of his soul, Lord Morley presents the reader with a story which, indeed, partially tells itself in the artless narrative of a contemporary, but is illuminated by piercing lights of his own shot athwart the homely texture of that recital. These are examples of grave elegiac eloquence; but when he turns to the Florentine publicists his mind is subdued to what it works in, and he achieves

effects not inferior to those of the *Principe* and the *Discorsi* in their epigrammatic precision ; as when he writes of Machiavelli that " he uses few or none of our loud easy words of praise and blame, he is not often sorry or glad, he does not smile and he does not scold, he is seldom indignant and never surprised." In that sentence he captures the spirit and almost re-echoes the style of him who wrote of Giovanpagolo that by his timidity he showed that " men know not how to be either splendidly wicked or wholly good."

This habitual self-restraint is characteristic not only of his style but of his method of approach to his subjects, and it explains the sobriety of his judgment as a historian. It is what distinguished him from Acton, who, with all his immense knowledge of history, was so obsessed by the question of morality that he allowed it to cloud, and overcloud, his judgments. Lord Morley is no less a moralist than Acton, but he has always grasped what Acton never understood, that morals have a history of their own, and that one must judge the great characters and the sombre episodes of history by the standards of the time. To Acton " the greatest crime is homicide " and killing is always murder ; but Lord Morley, on the other hand, can write of the guillotine without losing his head. In a sentence which gave great offence to the orthodox, he wrote of the Terror that its victims were an almost negligible quantity in comparison with the victims of religious persecution, and that, while the Terror slew its thousands, St. Bartholomew's Day had slain its tens of thousands. This was true ; and behind it

lay a truth, already emphasized by Quinet, that the Terrorists were merely the pupils of the *ancien régime*. Lord Morley had another advantage over Acton—to whom "great men are always bad men" and should be judged not less but more severely than their contemporaries—in that his life was one of action as well as of meditation, and that, both as journalist and as politician, he knew not only that politics are "one long second best" but that compromise in the sphere of action (which he has always been careful to distinguish from compromise in the sphere of opinion) is an almost daily necessity, and that men of action cannot be judged by the speculative standards of the cloister. The fact accounts for the equity, the balance, and the correctness of his judgments on Cromwell and Walpole. His estimate of Walpole will stand, and everything that has been published since, notably the Egmont papers, confirms it.

This is one of the reasons why Lord Morley's studies of Rousseau and Burke are models of what the "philosopher historian" and the "statesman historian" (to adopt a classification of his own) should strive to achieve. They discharge with conspicuous fidelity that which Goethe declared to be the main function of biography—to exhibit the man in relation to his times and to show to what extent his environment was inimical or propitious to him; how far he fashioned it, how far he was fashioned by it. In many respects both writers are as antipathetic to Lord Morley's own creed as they are to one another. Burke's declared preference for peace over truth, his exaltation of

prejudice, his antipathy to democracy, his fear of " putting men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason," his hatred, in short, of rationalist criticism, are not more opposed to the outlook and temper of the author of the essay " On Compromise " than are Rousseau's emotionalism, his substitution of intuition for reason, his dogmatism, and his indecent egotism. But it is characteristic of Lord Morley, and it was one of the secrets of his strength as a controversialist, that he rarely allows a difference of opinion to become an aversion, and he is always more concerned to understand men than to condemn them. This is notably true of his treatment of religion, wherein he is as superior to Gibbon as Gibbon is to Voltaire, and to Hume as Hume is to both. He is never malicious and rarely derisive. He can write of Puritanism as " a manifestation of elements in human nature that are indestructible " ; and some of his most eloquent pages are a tribute to the moral services of Calvin, of the Jesuits, and of the Catholic Church of the Apostolic and early Middle Ages. Lord Morley is in fact the very last to depreciate the part played by religious movements as periods of moral growth ; it is only when they harden into authority, not disputing reason but usurping it, that he takes arms against them. One finds in him what one would never seek, and never find, in Voltaire or Gibbon, but what is rarely absent from Renan, a deep appreciation of " the ghostly things ever laying siege to the soul," a sensitive ear to " the finer vibrations of the spiritual voice," and he has laid many a votive tribute on the altar of " holiness." He is

never a mystic as Sir Thomas Browne is a mystic, he does not love to pursue his reason to an *O altitudo*, and *Certum est quia impossible est* were anathema to him ; but he has a profound sense of the mystery of human existence, sometimes finding expression in a mood of " silent worship of the Unseen not made with hands." He dislikes Voltaire's irreverence as much, and for the same reason, as M. Faguet ; for, as Faguet says, when deprecating Voltaire's contempt for the marvellous, " there is a marvellous element in history, *for there is a marvellous element in the human soul.*"

As a biographer he stands in the front rank, and quite apart from his " Lives " of Cobden and Gladstone (which are not incorporated in this edition), his books on Diderot, Voltaire and Rousseau are, and will probably remain, the most penetrating, the most sympathetic, and the best-informed studies of their subjects in the English language. As a picture of the life and letters of the time they are in no way inferior to the similar studies of M. Faguet and M. Brunetière ; and his interpretation of Rousseau, in particular, strikes us as at once more coherent and more penetrating than that of either of these great French critics, one of whom is almost obsessed by the " plebeian " character and the other by the " criminal " temperament of his subject. " The edges of character," as Lord Morley reminds us, " are not as sharp as words are," and both Faguet and Brunetière are often apt to sacrifice truth to an epigram. Moreover, they have less sympathy than Lord Morley with the social influence of Voltaire, of whom Brunetière

estimates that it were better he had never been born, and of Rousseau, of whom the best that M. Faguet can say is that he likes him better than his enemies. But Lord Morley, as he has told us in his *Recollections* and in one of his rare moments of personal revelation, " A Few Words on French Models," approached these two destructive thinkers with a conviction that they were " on the whole on the side of human progress," and in a mood of vindication. And on the whole he has succeeded in his purpose, which was to show that they were the instruments of a great intellectual and social emancipation. One is tempted to regret, especially after reading his essay on Robespierre, whom he estimated at his true worth, long before M. Sorel wrote, as a *pitiably incompetent spinster*, that Lord Morley never gave us a history of the French Revolution. Would he, one likes to speculate, have then presented us with the obverse side of the influence of men of letters upon the course of the Revolution, as Sainte-Beuve and Sorel have presented it to us ? For there is truth in Sorel's paradox that these apostles of intellectual and political emancipation, by the very fury of their thinking, their fierce quarrels, and the " sinister invective " of their vocabulary, indoctrinated their disciples with an impatience of other opinions than their own which led directly to the proscriptions of the Terror. The men of letters, having been reduced by the laws of the *ancien régime* to a war of phrases, when they got possession of power made use of it to take away life with the same lethal passion as had formerly inspired them to take away

character. Sorel's mordant observation has its counterpart in Sainte-Beuve's remark of St. Just that "like all fanatics he confounded the triumph of his passions with that of his ideas." There was a time, at which Lord Morley could afford to smile, when a Chancellor of the Exchequer compared Mr. Morley to "that atrocious young man," as Sainte-Beuve called him, and devout Tories made each other's flesh creep by the prospect of a Liberal Government in which, holding high office, he would set up a guillotine for his political opponents in Trafalgar Square. It was a view of Lord Morley which could only be held by those who had never read him. If he acknowledged allegiance to any one thinker or political mentor, it was not Voltaire but Cordorcet, not Rousseau but Mill, not Robespierre but Turgot.

The truth is that as a critic of life and a student of character Lord Morley is always as shy of putting any historical personage on the black list as he would be loth to put any book on an Index Expurgatorius. He has protested, and rightly, against the inability of biographers, most notoriously Macaulay, "to conceive of conduct except as either right or wrong." For him the problem of conduct is too complex and the play of motive, intention, time, circumstance, too intricate in human affairs to justify the biographer in posing as a hanging judge. The result of this temperate and charitable attitude is that he has given us an extraordinarily sympathetic, versatile, and illuminating portrait-gallery of very diverse types: rationalist and ultramontane, Whig and Tory, Puritan and Cavalier. He does equal justice to Pym and to Strafford—

Strafford has a recurrent fascination for him—to Laud and to Cromwell, to Walpole and to Bolingbroke, while his study of the social circle that gathered round Burke and Johnson has the discrimination of one who was a *connoisseur* of men. In fact, he excels in literary portraiture, whether of historical characters or, as in the *Recollections*, of contemporaries. In this respect his book on Cromwell has merits of its own; without any pretensions to original research, it presents us with a life-like portrait of a character which, except in one rare moment of imagination, is never vivid (though rarely absent) in Gardiner's monumental pages on *The Commonwealth and Protectorate*. If any fault is to be found with Lord Morley's estimate, it is that he follows Gardiner's too closely, and in one case not closely enough; too closely because he is too ready to accept Gardiner's estimate of Cromwell's work as purely negative, whereas Mr. Firth is much nearer the truth when he points to the enduring, if intermittent, results of his protection of Nonconformists, his removal of the restrictions on Irish trade, his union of the kingdoms, and his colonial policy, while his foreign policy was not so much an "anachronism" as a chronic error intelligible when viewed contemporaneously, however unintelligible it may seem in the light of subsequent events. But, despite this, he has made Cromwell very real to us, and he has invested the theological and political disputes of the time with the reality which we should expect from one so practised in the history of opinion and in the art of government. The chapter on "The West-

minster Assembly and the Conflict of Ideals " is an admirable example of this ; and the whole book is a reminder to us, in these days when history is regarded as the exclusive province of the specialist with his " sources " and his seminar, how much history has to gain when one who passed his life, not in the twilight of archives, but in forum and council-chamber, brings his experience of life to its interpretation.

We have left to the last a consideration of the volumes which deal with political speculation —the *Compromise*, the *Notes on Politics and History*, and the Essays, regrouped in this edition, on Maine, on Lecky, and on " Democracy and Reaction." With the notable exception of the essay on Compromise, Lord Morley is more of a critic than an original thinker ; he is the historian of rationalism, not, like Hume, its philosopher. His views on some of the great questions with which his authors deal—the ultimate problems of human existence, free-will, immortality, the nature of experience, appearance and reality—are more often suggested than expressed. The same is true, though less true, of his contributions to political speculation. He has never given us, like Mill, a treatise on Government, perhaps because he had a notorious distaste for the discussion of political machinery and an imperfect belief in the value of political contrivances. Moreover, he is often elusive ; as in the essay on " Democracy and Reaction," he propounds far more questions than he answers, and one may search his pages in vain for a solution of the antinomy between democracy

and liberty which has vexed political thinkers like Hamilton, Tocqueville and Acton. There is little trace in these pages of a discussion of that growing revolt against representative government which seeks an outlet in the extra-Parliamentary activities of the primary, the trade union, the shop stewards, and the Soviet, and which, by a curious reversion, is leading to the dictatorship over the passive many of the enterprising few, until "democracy" begins to look perilously like a species devoured by its own parasites. The word "caucus" rarely profanes his pages; and although well aware, as was Mill, that a democracy is not always the best auditorium for the voice of reason, his conviction that the average man is both a reasonable and a reasoning being, with a sense of political responsibility, is apparently so strong that he has no time to discuss the potent part played in politics by instinct, habit, mimicry, suggestion in the formation of opinion—a field of study which, opened up, like so many other fields, by Bagehot, is now cultivated by a host of political thinkers—Ostrogorski, Lebon, Tarde, and others of their tribe—whose method is not so much rationalist as empirical. Unwavering in his conviction that men must seek truth at all costs, he is apt to forget the sly remark of Bacon that, by a congenital infirmity of the human mind, "a mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure." It is vulgar considerations like these that recur critically to one's mind when reading the plea in *Compromise* for rationalized conviction. As an intellectual effort the whole book is a remarkable

tour de force, a masterpiece of vigorous and cogent dialectic, and in its way unanswerable. It is a sustained argument against compliance with conventional standards when they conflict with one's inner convictions, whether the motive be fear, interest, or indolence. It is also an argument against silence in the publication of one's own belief from doubt as to the timeliness or the wisdom of disturbing the settled convictions of others. Now Voltaire, as we know, regarded an old superstition as a thing which a statesman would use as a bit in the mouths of the people, and held it a lesser evil to leave the bit there than to give the people their head, for he doubted the rationality of the common average man. And on this point we are not sure that Voltaire was not right. Men are more influenced by feeling than by reason ; and there is truth in Newman's saying when applied to the mass of mankind, though it would be no more true of Lord Morley than of Condorcet, that while many a man will live and die upon a dogma, no man will be a martyr for a conclusion. This is a fact which the rationalist is too apt to ignore. And it seems to us that Lord Morley cuts the ground from under his feet, and is perilously near arguing in a circle, when he is betrayed into the assertion that " principle is only another name for a proposition stating the terms of one of the larger expediencies." Once admit expediency as a test and the rigour of his main thesis disappears ; for the duty of plain speaking immediately becomes relative to time, place, interest and circumstance, all of them debatable. It is only fair to say that that dangerous

sentence disappears in this edition of *Compromise*, but it is to be found writ large in many other places in his writings. And to us it seems very like a confusion of thought, involving the same fallacy as the old tag that " honesty is the best policy." For if honesty is the best policy, the dishonest man can always argue that what is impolitic is not honest. There is an ethical confusion of ends in a statement like this ; and the difference between the minor expediency, which according to Lord Morley is bad, and the major expediency, which is good, becomes a mere question of quantitative analysis. We find Lord Morley more convincing when, as in his analysis of the doctrine of liberty, he argues that democracy enables a State to find its leaders by a process of natural selection, or in his parable of the tares and the wheat, or again in his exorcism of the idols of the theatre and the market-place. But in his *Notes on Politics and History*, written nearly thirty years later, and the last of his political works, he is much more alive to the inertia of the human mind, to the strength of sentiment as compared to opinion, and to the urgent need of educating men's minds to think before indoctrinating them with new thoughts. Here, indeed, he is on common ground with Cornewall Lewis and Maine, two acute political thinkers with whom otherwise he has little or nothing in common.

But when all is said there is only one way of having more wisdom than Lord Morley : it is to have as much without his courage, the courage that leads him into so many fields of speculation. It is

impossible for any man to extend his front so widely without leaving some places open to assault. His works remain a noble monument of sustained intellectual and moral ardour, of which the present age presents too few examples, and it were as vain to praise him as it is impossible to imitate him.

CHAPTER V

THE *LIVES* OF GLADSTONE AND COBDEN

BIOGRAPHY is an art, but the artists are few. Of all forms of literature it is the most difficult in that its material is the most intractable—letters, diaries, speeches, State papers, washing bills, are the dry bones of it, and of such material there is usually more than enough; but to breathe life into them demands a creative faculty, and such a faculty, always rare, is seldom associated with the fiduciary office of a literary executor. The anatomists, indeed, are not wanting, and to put the bones together is not difficult, but the result is too often a skeleton and not a man, or a man so emaciated and of such low vitality that for whole chapters of the "life" the heart seems to have stopped beating altogether. For the problem of the biographer is, as Carlyle truly said it was, "the Problem of Existence." We are, in his striking phrase, all of us *indentured* to live, faced with the problem of "keeping body and soul together," and the task of the biographer is the same—it is the keeping together of the soul and body of his subject. Rarely does he succeed in performing it. Hence those innumerable biographies which, if not dry as ossuaries, are cold and damp as

mortuaries. The body is there, but the soul has departed, and it is this stagnant air of the charnel-house that accounts for so many of them being as unreadable as they are unread.

The truth is that if a biography is to have the unity, the symbolism and the immediateness of appeal by which we recognize a work of art, the writer must aim at a portrayal of character, instinct with life and with that volition without which there is no character, and all else should be rigidly subordinated, and if need be eliminated, to that one end. If it achieves this, it achieves the inevitableness of dramatic art, and the "life" is as one of those great plays in which the end is implicit in the beginning, there is nothing hid which is not eventually revealed, the surprises cease to be inexplicable the moment they are unfolded, and the hero's character is seen to be the secret of his destiny. Lord Morley's biographies of Cobden and Gladstone achieve this, the one more, the other less, and with the sure instinct of a master of his craft he sets his stage for the drama of the life as Shakespeare sets his own—the first scene has the quality of predestination, the same foreboding quality which arrests the reader in the whispered colloquies on the haunted terrace of Elsinore, in the brooding petulance of Iago in the streets of Venice, and the sullen gossip of the tribunes before the advent of the triumphal Cæsar. Such is the felicity of the opening pages of the "Life" of Cobden, introducing the reader, in a few graphic strokes, to the agrarian landscape in which

the great agitator against Agrarianism first opened his eyes upon the world. Such, in more abstract language, is the opening paragraph of the " Life " of Burke, in which every extreme of controversial opinion as to the merits of the great controversialist is nicely balanced, as though warning the reader of the great issues which await him. Such, also, are the opening pages of the " Life " of Gladstone, in which the antinomies of his character prepare the reader for the life of one who wrestled with his soul as Jacob wrestled with the angel. " What interests the world in Mr. Gladstone is even more what he was than what he did "—thus does Morley pose the problem of character at the outset, and he rarely loses sight of it.

To claim for his biography of Gladstone the supremacy of a great work of art would, indeed, be to claim too much. It lacks the coherence of his biography of Cobden, for Cobden was a far simpler character, with the simplicity of a man of one idea. Moreover, its span is much greater—it is little less than the history of the Victorian Age, and the author was only too sensible of the difficulty of drawing the line between history and biography. Long historical excursions—sometimes, it must be admitted, rather tedious excursions—on the Ritualistic controversies, the Eastern question, the Irish question, the Neapolitan question, the Suffrage issue, Public Finance, and a host of others—occur and recur, in the course of which the personality of Mr. Gladstone is for the time being almost lost to us. This, of course, is inevitable in a political biography, which, by its very nature,

has also to partake of the character of a history. Mr. Lathbury had a far simpler task when he confined himself to the story of Mr. Gladstone's religious opinions, undistracted by the problems, political, social, economic, which thrust themselves upon the attention of his biographer.

There were other difficulties. Mr. Gladstone was the most copious of men in an age of copiousness. The Victorian was surely the heroic age of speaking and writing. Men talked and wrote interminably. Cobden, who could be as terse as Mr. Gladstone was prolix, addressed large audiences in the open, "in spite of heavy showers of rain," for six hours on end; Palmerston on a critical occasion defended his policy in the House "from the dusk of one day till the dawn of the next"; Mr. Gladstone records blithely in his diary that he spoke in the House "from 5 till 9 without great exhaustion," and, what is more surprising, without exhausting his audience. Lord Palmerston reads a speech of Mr. Gladstone's in a railway carriage and, having alighted, writes a letter of eight closely written quarto pages to the orator, who replies with another twelve. Mr. Gladstone commences a letter to *The Times* on the principle of authority in the Church, and, having recited all the distinguishing tenets of the true Church from the doctrine of grace in Baptism to the Apostolical foundation of the Episcopate, with the fearful warning "that there are dangerous logomachies among us," he proceeds, "But I hold my hand"—and does not hold it. Having continued for yet another page or two, he informs

the weary Editor that " it is not necessary for the argument to go further into detail upon these very solemn subjects "—and he goes into detail.* His letters to his friends are on the same portentous scale. No doubt, with all his absorbing activities, he could have pleaded Pascal's excuse to a friend, for writing too long a letter, that he had no time to write a short one. But no amount of time could ever have distilled Mr. Gladstone's copiousness. He is rarely witty, and never terse. With him, as Lord Morley says, " the pen was no instrument of diversion "—it was the sword of conflict, but a sword blunted by incessant exercise. That " disengagement " which, according to his biographer, was the charm of his talk, as of all good talk, is rarely, if ever, apparent in his correspondence. When Mr. Gladstone wanted to clear his mind, he always wrote a letter, and the least important aspect of it was the person to whom it was addressed. " At all times," dryly remarks Mr. Lathbury, " there is a strong likeness between one letter of his and another. It could never be said of them, as it was said of Newman's, that they were ' instinct with the consciousness of the person he addresses.' On the contrary there is at times a curious unlikeness between letters and correspondents, and we are tempted to wonder how much the particular reader appreciated or even understood what was sent to him." Mr.

* The letter, a truly terrifying example of Mr. Gladstone's prolixity, is to be found in Mr. Lathbury's *Correspondence on Church and Religion of W. E. Gladstone*, vol. i. pp. 270, etc. It is not surprising that the Editor of the *Times* could find no room for it.

Gladstone's eye seems ever to have been directed inward; his letters have none of the graphic touches which illuminate Cobden's story of his wanderings up and down the earth. You would never look in Mr. Gladstone's letters for such engaging sallies as that in which Cobden describes the difference between a Scottish audience and an English one, when he crossed the Border to carry on the work of the League and found that nothing could exceed the attentiveness of his Scottish hearers until he made an appeal for subscriptions, whereupon the meeting scattered "as if one had read the Riot Act." In short, Mr. Gladstone's letters are not only very long, they are, unfortunately, also very dull; and with dullness even the gods, as the German poet has told us, struggle in vain.

Such a mass of material might well appal the stoutest heart that ever beat in the breast of a resolute biographer. Indeed, Lord Morley quailed at the sight of the vast trunks and boxes of letters and memoranda filling the muniment-room at Hawarden, and told Professsor Firth that he was determined to limit himself to the compass of two volumes. But the facts were too much for him, and the result is three volumes of one of the longest biographies in the language. And, viewed simply as a biography, it is unquestionably too long. It may well be that it was written too soon—too near the events with which it dealt. Time, "which resolveth all things," is a great sifter of the wheat from the chaff of politics, and has a way of reducing the proportions of political controversies into a

manageable compass which is beyond the powers of a contemporary. Moreover, it is constantly yielding new material from other sources, the accumulation of which enables the biographer to see his subject in better perspective. Lord Morley's biography of Mr. Gladstone would have gained if, for example, it had appeared after, instead of before, Lord Fitzmaurice's admirable *Life of Lord Granville*, which, written with a mastery of foreign policy to which Morley could not aspire, makes many things in foreign policy, particularly in the fateful years of the early "eighties," very much more intelligible than they were before. Viewed, however (as it should be), as a history of the times, rather than as a work of art of graceful proportions, Lord Morley's book is hardly too long, and the historical setting of many of its chapters, in which the writer introduces the reader to the particular problem which confronted the statesman at some particular epoch, is often masterly and such as only a man deeply read, as the biographer was, in history could have achieved. Such, for example, is the summary of the subterranean social revolution under which the crust of society was visibly breaking when the young Gladstone was thinking of nothing but theology and foreign politics. Such also is the wholly admirable survey of the problem of Church and State as it presented itself to different schools of opinion after the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act—of which more in a moment. Such is the rapid sketch of the Near Eastern question as it presented itself on the outbreak of the Crimean War, and

such also the story of the Italian emancipation movement. In these particular chapters there is no want of perspective; the want of perspective is rather in the whole than in the parts. In many chapters, dealing with Mr. Gladstone's minor activities—his management of the Hawarden estate, his holiday excursions, his mission to the Ionian islands—posterity will take but a languid interest, but Lord Morley, it must be remembered, was writing the life of a man for a generation which had known and revered him, and an enormous proportion of whom took an insatiable interest in everything he did and everything he said. Crowds of pilgrims visited Hawarden like a shrine, collected the chips whittled by his axe as though they were sacred relics, clamoured for a speech as though it were manna from heaven. Never was there such political idolatry before; never will there be such again. To-day these transports of public enthusiasm are reserved for the trans-Atlantic heroes of the film and the boxing-ring, or the protagonists of the cup-tie and the golf championship. The change marks all the difference between the Victorian Age and our own. The Victorians venerated character, as the one thing needful, and in Mr. Gladstone with a sure instinct they found it; we in our own age prostrate ourselves before notoriety, and mistake it for greatness, a notoriety which to-day is and to-morrow is not—the wind passeth over it and it is gone.

Perhaps the most successful part of this massive biography is the history of Mr. Gladstone's religious

views and his gradual emancipation in regard to the relations of Church and State, a subject which always had a profound attraction for his biographer. The intellectual progress by which Mr. Gladstone, starting from the doctrine that the State must have a visible Conscience in a visible Church, and that the propagation of religious truth is one of the main ends of government, arrived at the conclusion that the best service the State can do the Church is to let it alone, is shown not only as the reflection in the mind of one man of that process of secularization of the State which is the history of the Victorian Age, but as a process of his own mental growth from the moment that Mr. Gladstone, after his spiritual crisis over the Maynooth grant, made up his mind to remain in the service of politics rather than take orders in the Church. The Jewish Disabilities Bill, the Burials Bill, the Irish Disestablishment Bill, the Affirmation Bill, are all stages in this progress, and at each stage we see Mr. Gladstone, after an interval of characteristic "suspense," unfolding petal by petal until in the heart of the Anglican rose is discovered a modern Liberal, the protagonist of civil and religious liberty. These are the noblest pages in Gladstone's history. In matters of dogma alone he was adamant, disputing inch by inch, in language worthy of Pusey himself, the proud boast of Tyndall and his fellow scientists: "We claim, and will wrest, the whole cosmological domain from the theologians." In all this obsession with religious questions there was, it is true, a not surprising lack of humour, never better

illustrated than by his remark after reading *Nicholas Nickleby* that there was "*no church* in the *book*, and the motives are not those of religion." But in this Mr. Gladstone was typically Victorian. The Victorian Age was intensely serious. It is easy enough to laugh at its seriousness in these flippant times, but it was the seriousness of men who were intensely in earnest, of men to whom *conviction* was a law of life, whether they were High Churchmen or Evangelicals, Christians or Rationalists, and in that respect Gladstone's biographer was entirely at one with them. By their fruits ye shall know them; there were giants in those days; no generation in our history has produced men of nobler character, none has achieved so much for the improvement of the race. The spectacle of Manning and Gladstone wrestling with the powers of darkness for the soul of Newman almost appals one by its tragic intensity of conviction. On hearing of Newman's intention to take the fatal step of "going over," as though he were on the edge of a chasm, Mr. Gladstone writes to Manning that he "staggers to and fro like a drunken man," he is at his "wit's end," it is all "frightful, frightful." The effects of Newman's secession on the Catholic movement in the Church of England will, he apprehends, be such as to make the horrors of the French Revolution "cold in comparison." It may seem the language of hyperbole, but it was the language of his age, an age in which a decision of the Judicial Committee on the use or abuse of ecclesiastical vestments, the doctrine of grace in baptism, the

belief in the Inspiration of the Scriptures, excited the public as to-day only a repulsive murder or a lubricous divorce could excite it—and who shall say that the excitement was not a healthier one? Whether he that ministered the Holy Communion should minister only with surplice and stole or with surplice, stole and cope, whether the cope should include a chasuble or exclude it, whether the "Eastward position" was legitimate or illegitimate, whether the Athanasian Creed should be recited with a mental reservation or not recited at all—these things convulsed the country at intervals like an epileptiform seizure, mobilized the rural deaneries to a man, and filled Exeter Hall with Evangelicals to whom Shaftesbury ministered like a Hebrew prophet with his electrifying cry, "Away with the unclean thing!" It is easy, as we have said, to laugh at these things—one may even laugh at the fierce controversy excited by the publication of *Essays and Reviews*, but they were the birth-pangs of the spiritual freedom which is now the common heritage of us all. Some of them, indeed, belong to an age of thought which we have wholly outlived; others, by the extent to which they absorbed public opinion, attest how narrow were its confines in the days before the reduction in the price of newspapers and the extensions of the franchise. We have changed all that. The working classes were probably as indifferent to these issues as they were inarticulate, and for them the "visible Church" of Mr. Gladstone's historic sense and of all this tumult, was, no doubt, nothing more visible than "a d—d

large building with an organ in it "—as the profane private in the Guards, interrogated by his comrade with a " Come now, what *is* the Church of England ? " described it in the shocked hearing of Mr. Gladstone on the top of a coach.

But to Mr. Gladstone, who, as his biographer says of him, " might have been the greatest Christian doctor since Bossuet," these were great issues and momentous. From the day on which, in the Church of St. Peter's at Rome, there came to him, like Paul on the road to Damascus, the vision of the historic and visible Church as a divine society, he ceased to be an Evangelical, and with the finishing of his famous essay on Church and State the transformation to High Anglicanism was all but complete. Thenceforward his view of the Church of England was that it was her " noble vocation " to be " a sentinel on the side looking toward the Church of Rome, whose duty it is to maintain defence there, but to maintain it in love "— a view of sentry duty which to many Evangelicals seemed dangerously like fraternizing with the enemy. His sense of the historic continuity of the Church of England was not infallible, and he did not escape the error of that school of High Anglicans of whom it was so wittily said by Maitland that they were at pains to prove that the Church of England was Protestant before the Reformation in order to establish that it was Catholic after it. He was, indeed, better read in patristic literature than in the canon law of the Middle Ages. The issues, as they presented themselves to him and to others of his generation,

during the years 1835–1845, are put in a passage which is a striking proof, if proof were needed, of the ease, the sureness of touch, one might also say the sympathy, with which Morley always approached a theological debate or an eccelsiastical issue :

" The association of political and social change with theological revolution was the most remarkable of all the influences in the first twenty years of Mr. Gladstone's public life. There rose once more into active prominence the supreme debate, often cutting deep into the labours of the modern statesman, always near to the heart of the speculations of the theologians, in many fields urgent alike to ecclesiastic, historian, and philosopher, the inquiry : what is a Church ? This opened the sluices and let out floods. What is the Church of England ? To ask that question was to ask a hundred others. Creeds, dogmas, ordinances, hierarchy, parliamentary institution, judicial tribunals, historical tradition, the prayer-book, the Bible—all these enormous topics, sacred and profane, with all their countless ramifications, were rapidly swept into a tornado of such controversy as had not been seen in England since the Revolution. Was the Church a purely human creation, changing with time and circumstance, like all the other creations of the heart and brain and will of man ? Were its bishops mere officers, like high ministers of mundane State, or were they, in actual historic truth as in supposed theological necessity, the direct lineal successors of the first apostles, endowed from the beginning with the mystical prerogatives on which the efficacy of all the sacramental rites depended ? What were its relations

to the Councils of the first four centuries, what to the Councils of the fifteenth and the sixteenth, what to the Fathers? The Scottish presbyterians held the conception of a Church as strongly as anybody; but England, broadly speaking, had never been persuaded that there could be a Church without bishops.

"In the answers to this group of hard questions, terrible divisions that had been long muffled and huddled away burst into view. The stupendous quarrel of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries again broke out. To the Erastian lawyer the Church was an institution erected on principles of political expediency by act of parliament. To the school of Whately and Arnold it was a corporation of divine origin, devised to strengthen men in their struggle for goodness and holiness by the association and mutual help of fellow-believers. To the evangelical it was hardly more than a collection of congregations commended in the Bible for the diffusion of knowledge and right interpretation of the Scriptures, the commemoration of Gospel events and the linking of Gospel truths to a well-ordered life. To the high Anglican as to the Roman Catholic, the Church was something very different from this; not a fabric reared by man, nor in truth any mechanical fabric at all, but a mystically appointed channel of Salvation, an indispensable element in the relation between the soul of man and its Creator. To be a member of it was not to join an external association, but to become an inward partaker in ineffable and mysterious graces to which no other access lay open. Such was the Church Catholic and Apostolic as set up from the beginning, and of this immense mystery, of this saving agency, of this

incommensurable spiritual force, the established Church of England was the local presence and the organ.

"The noble restlessness of the profounder and more penetrating minds was not satisfied, any more than Bossuet had been, to think of the Church as only an element in a scheme of individual salvation. They sought in it the comprehensive solution of all the riddles of life and time. Newman drew in powerful outline the sublime and sombre anarchy of human history.

"This is the enigma, this the solution in faith and spirit, in which Mr. Gladstone lived and moved."

The reader who ponders this passage will find in it not only the key to the mind of Mr. Gladstone, but the key to the mental disposition of his biographer. The voice is the voice of Gibbon, but a Gibbon writing with unction. The whole passage—and there are many others (most notably that on the Tractarian movement) like it—corroborates the shrewd judgment of Mr. Hardy, to which I have elsewhere referred, that "if only Morley had left politics alone he might have been the Gibbon of his age." *

Opinion about Mr. Gladstone has touched almost every extreme, particularly in his own lifetime, when the ashes of controversy were still hot. Like every man who has ever made any

* Mr. Gladstone was once asked in the hearing of Lord Fitzmaurice, to whom I owe the story, who, in his opinion, were the three greatest historians. He replied, "Thucydides, Sarpi, and"—after a pause of reflection—"Gibbon." Lord Morley's choice would probably have been the same, but he would have substituted Tacitus for Sarpi.

progress in his political ideas, he was accused of inconsistency, and even of duplicity. Neither charge is intelligent. "*Presque tous nous sommes doubles*," Renan has reminded us, and to have a dual nature is no proof of duplicity. With a mind "accommodated to the cloister," Gladstone spent his whole life in the political arena; with an intellect thoroughly at home in the nice distinctions and subtle refinements of theology, he had a most masculine grasp of fact in the realm of fiscal policy; conservative in his religious beliefs, he was almost revolutionary in his political development; narrow in his views of what constituted communion with the true Church, he was comprehensive as only a Liberal could be in his ideas of what entitled men to membership of the modern State, and to all its franchises. Many of the reproaches directed against his adoption of new legislative measures entirely miss the fact of a mental growth which was the natural growth of a mind constantly developing. Until comparatively late in life, when there was a change for the worse, it was not casuistry but conscientiousness, the conscientiousness of a man of noble character, which accounted for the inconclusiveness, the tentativeness, of his public utterances. He "thought aloud," and well is it said by his biographer that "many of his seeming mystifications were in fact the result of a really embarrassed judgment." When the way was clear, as Lord Morley points out, for example in free trade, colonial government, dissenters' chapels, Jewish disabilities, catholic bishoprics, "nobody could

run more straight." Many of his critics thought his championship of the Irish Disestablishment Bill the improvization of political opportunism, but the publication of his letters has shown that twenty-four years earlier, as early as 1845, he had been vexed with the question whether the maintenance of an Establishment representing the belief of a mere handful of the people could be reconciled with social justice.* As Lord Acton, who knew him well, has remarked,† " The change was neither sudden nor subject to external cause." But Mr. Gladstone had the instinct of the true statesman in divining that there is a time for all things, and to be opportune in legislation is not necessarily to be an opportunist. Acton notes with approval the estimate of a historian that the key to Gladstone's character was *assimilation*—" Mr. Gladstone absorbs in the shape of popular vapour what he gives back in scientific showers." The history of Gladstone's mind is like a dramatization of the history of his time ; therein thesis and antithesis are locked together in a dialectical struggle even as they were in current controversy ; his mind is the forum of the time. But he was very far from truckling to the passions of the mob ; he could be as unflinching as Cobden and Bright in condemning, in the very face of popular acclamation, what he thought to be morally wrong—the China War is a case in point. He could never be brought to admit that private and public morality were two different things with different standards of conduct ; his

* See Lathbury, vol. i. p. 148.

† *Historical Essays and Studies*, p. 479.

course would have been infinitely easier if he could have been. Well was he described by Lord Salisbury as "a great Christian," and he was a man who worked out his political convictions, like the Christian his salvation, with fear and trembling. He was revered by his fellow-countrymen to the point of idolatry because he himself had in him that spirit of reverence which, as his biographer has noted elsewhere,* "is one of the highest predispositions of the English character." Therein he was poles apart from Disraeli, and a keen observer in the *Times* of that day, in describing the famous duel between the two in the House in 1852, is quick to note the difference: Disraeli was brilliant, sarcastic, ingenious, and full of artifice, but "with glaring defects of tone, temper and feeling," and with "invective pushed to the point of virulence"; Gladstone was "less ambitious, less studied, but more natural," his speech characterized throughout "by the most earnest moral sincerity." The one could merely dazzle, the other could persuade—with "a power of persuasion entirely denied to his antagonist." So true is it that if you want to move men you must appeal to what is best in them.

Gladstone's transition from Conservatism to Liberalism is the least difficult of his political changes to explain, and can puzzle no one except those who are not versed in the political history of the time. In the period from 1846 to 1868 political parties were in an extraordinarily fluid state, and Gladstone's hesitation between Derby

* *Miscellanies* (the Essay on Carlyle), i. p. 163.

and Palmerston in the crucial years of 1856 to 1857 will be intelligible enough to those who remember that in those days there was talk of Derby joining Palmerston or Palmerston joining Derby, and that the Whig statesman had begun his political career under Canning, the Tory under Grey. Between the two parties there were the Peelites, who, in Burke's phrase about himself, " wished to preserve consistency, but who would preserve consistency by varying the means to secure the unity of their end "—though Disraeli, characteristically enough, could see in them nothing but a faction who were " always putting themselves up to auction and buying themselves in." In this No Man's Land of politics Gladstone wandered for many years, resisting one overture to office after another, tortured by scruple, perplexed in the extreme, " a Bedouin of Parliament," as the *Spectator* of the day happily described him, " a noble being full of spirit and power, but not to be tamed into the ordinary ways of civil life." In all this his temperament was curiously like that of his biographer ; like him he had, as Cobden said of himself, " a horror of losing my individuality which is to me as existence itself " ; like his biographer, he was " at heart a solitary man " ; like him the problem of conduct was ever present to his mind, and was only to be resolved by prayer and fasting. To mediocre minds such agonies are quite unknown, and when they see a change of party they can see nothing but political opportunism. In Gladstone's own case, his adhesion to the Liberals was, as he himself said, no arbitrary

act, but the result of " the slow and resistless forces of conviction." But the common man will forgive a change of principle where he cannot tolerate a change of party—such is the empire over the imagination of names in place of things. Gladstone's political development during these years is seen on close inspection to be steady, consistent and harmonious; when it is not this, the secret is to be found in some old allegiance, some cherished sentiment, some local affection such as dies hard in all men of any sensibility of feeling. Oxford was one. And it surely does not lie with any son of that ancient University to reproach him with this filial devotion. " As a planet's orbit has puzzled astronomers," says his biographer, " until they discover the secret of its irregularities in the attraction of an unseen and unsuspected neighbour in the firmament, so some devious motions of this great luminary of ours were perturbations due in fact to the influence of his new constituency." His " last manifestation of Toryism " was on University Reform. How strong a hold Oxford possessed upon his affections is illustrated by that moving message, dictated from the lips of the dying statesman when he lay prostrate and almost unconscious :

" There is no expression of Christian sympathy that I value more than that of the ancient university of Oxford, the God-fearing, God-sustaining university of Oxford. I served her, perhaps mistakenly, but to the best of my ability. My most earnest prayers are hers to the uttermost and to the last."

Rarely, we think, has any statesman so absorbed the attention of his contemporaries. His Titanic industry amazed an age which knew not the meaning of the word " idleness " ; his intellectual curiosity disturbed a generation than which there has been none more inquisitive ; his energy was almost supernatural. He was the object of an almost fearful solicitude to men so diverse as Newman, Manning, Pusey, Ruskin, Carlyle, Cornewall Lewis, Bright, Aberdeen, and a hundred others. There is abundant testimony in the " Life " that men of every shade of opinion and every vocation—churchmen, jurists, politicians, men of letters, men of science—watched and debated him like a new planet swum into the firmament whose course they would fain predict, but could not foretell, whose influence for good or for evil was a matter of anxious speculation, a planet which might disturb all the laws of political meteorology, changing political seasons and deflecting political tides, obscuring the light or illuminating the darkness, setting up great tidal waves of opinion which might sweep away all the landmarks of the political mariner. He unchained immense forces—the forces of Democracy and of Nationalism—the influence and direction of which might be good or might be evil, the energy of which may yet prove to be more disintegrating than liberalizing, more catastrophic than creative. When all is said, there is a residuum in Mr. Gladstone's character which remains unexplained and is, indeed, inexplicable. All great men of action have, as Goethe divined, something " dæmonic " in them,

something which "is not to be resolved through understanding and reason." * It is a kind of natural force, neither moral nor immoral, finding expression at rare moments in individuals of outstanding stature and of marvellous energy. It is—

"something which manifests itself only in contradictions, and which, therefore, could not be comprehended under any idea, still less under any one word. It was not godlike, for it seemed without reason; nor human, for it had no understanding; nor devilish, for it was beneficent. . . . It resembled chance, for it evinced no succession; it was like Providence, for it hinted at connection. It seemed to penetrate all that limits us; it seemed to deal arbitrarily with the necessary elements of our existence; it contracted time and expanded space. . . . From such persons a tremendous energy seems to emanate, and they exercise a wonderful power over all creatures, and even over the elements; and, indeed, who shall say how much farther such influence may extend? . . . Seldom, if ever, do they find their equals among their contemporaries; nothing can vanquish them but the universe itself, with which they have begun the fray; and it is from observations of facts such as these that the strange, but tremendous saying must have risen: *Nemo contra Deum nisi Deus ipse.*" †

Of such stuff was Mr. Gladstone made. He often seemed to the observer "possessed." If he had not been a very good man, he would have been a very bad one.

* "Was durch Verstand und Vernunft nicht aufzulosen ist."—*Gespräche mit Eckermann* (Insel Verlag. S. 601).

† *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Insel Verlag), Buch xx. s. 816–18.

A typical Englishman he was not, and never could have been—a man of genius is never typical. The typical Englishman of the mid-Victorian period is Palmerston, " a sort of medium Englishman," as Acton happily calls him. He was just as intractable a colleague as Mr. Gladstone, as Lord John Russell found to his cost, but his intractability proceeded not from the embarrassing presence of a conscience but from the absence of one, not from a subtle intellect but from a robustness of animal spirits which led to his constantly being declared " off side " in the political game. " If there are two things on earth that John Bull hates," Mr. Gladstone once declared, " they are an abstract proposition and the Pope." Mr. Gladstone loved the former and respected the latter ; Palmerston hated both. Englishmen revered Gladstone, but were never quite sure that they understood him ; Palmerston they could pat on the back as one of themselves. They could always be sure that Palmerston would show them sport. Mr. Gladstone was rarely, if ever, personal ; Palmerston, on the other hand, as he told Cobden, believed in attacking persons, and whenever he saw a malcontent head he hit it a resounding thwack. His combativeness, his robust, if tactless, patriotism, his capacity for getting into scrapes and his equal capacity for getting out of them, his love of a " scrap," his freedom from malice, his gift for " keeping his end up "—all these things the average Englishman could understand and appreciate, for he saw in them a reflection of his own character. With such an one Mr.

Gladstone was most uneasily yoked, and with him Cobden refused to be yoked at all, declaring him "the greatest impostor since Mahomet." But Gladstone, although he conforms to no type and is to be measured by no rule, none the less typifies all that was best in the Victorian Age in his fervour and depth of conviction. A political crisis was with him, as often as not, a spiritual crisis—sometimes even an agony and a bloody sweat. In these days we smile at such fastidiousness, it seems entirely foreign to an age and generation which has seen "Unionists" converted to Home Rule, and something much more than Home Rule, in a single night, and baptized with the new faith by a forceful Prime Minister like Charlemagne's converts among the German tribes, not individually but in whole platoons. Such sudden conversions were indeed not unknown in that age—Disraeli's conversion and that of his party to "Reform" is a case in point, but the shock it gave to the public conscience is a proof of its sensitiveness. Mr. Gladstone's scrupulousness, on the other hand, was in no way exceptional; it is just as apparent in "the two Gracchi of Rochdale," Cobden and Bright. There were, it is true, many men of commoner mould in those days, as in every other; in the ten years after 1832 the Whigs, except Lord John Russell, as Cobden found, were not a whit less conservative than the Tories or less indifferent to the appalling social problems which surrounded them—and so it remained long afterwards. The opportunist and the place-hunter are to be found in every age; the cynic also.

There is a familiar ring about the gossip at Brooks's in Disraeli's *Sybil*, when the members are discussing Egremont's outspoken speech: "It was a very remarkable speech. *I wonder what he wants.*" They never said that of Mr. Gladstone; what they often did say was, "I wonder what he means." So Palmerston wondered when Cobden declined to take office, "What then are you doing in the House of Commons?" a catechism which Mr. Gladstone often addressed to himself in the middle period of his life. Such intractability of political temper moved the ungodly to scorn. But in this matter Gladstone and Cobden were at one with their biographer, and the explanation is the same —all three were profoundly conscientious men. It was indeed the secret of their popular appeal, and well does Morley say of Gladstone, "No one gains such ascendancy over men as he who appeals to the nobler part in human nature." It was a note that Disraeli never struck, a harmony to which that cynical ear was never attuned. Let the reader turn to Gladstone's greatest speeches—the speeches on the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, on the China War, and on the Affirmation Bill—and he will realize the truth of this.

But the mind is subdued to what it works in, and there came a change. During the last twenty years of Gladstone's political life, there is a visible deterioration—the great moralist becomes a great sophist, one might almost say of him what Lord Morley says of another, that he was "a surpliced conjurer." That most profane man, Mr. Labouchere, witnessing one of his equivocations during

the Home Rule controversy, is reported to have said, " It's no good playing poker with the old man—he's always producing a trump card from up his sleeve and pretending that the Holy Ghost placed it there." All the worst faults of the theological temperament made their appearance at opportune moments—its " economies," its " reserves," its casuistry. His biographer, in the notable chapter entitled " Characteristics," describes this aspect of his hero happily enough—he is not so happy in his attempt to defend it :

" No man of his own day," says his biographer, " was half so often put upon his trial for inconsistency, and he was always most easily provoked to make a vehement reply. In that process Mr. Gladstone's natural habit of resort to qualifying words, and his skill in showing that a new attitude could be reconciled by strict reasoning with the logical contents of old dicta, gave him a wonderful advantage. His adversary, as he strode confidently along the smooth grass, suddenly found himself treading on a serpent ; he had overlooked a condition, a proviso, a word of hypothesis or contingency, that sprang from its ambush and brought his triumph to naught on the spot."

Of which weakness his biographer says, " It is at any rate better than the front of brass which takes any change of opinion for matter-of-course expedient, as to which the least said will be soonest mended." It is natural to compare, in this respect, the two men so often matched in Titanic debate —Gladstone and Disraeli, and each has his following among students of the time. Both were

unquestionably men of genius, but when it comes to an estimate of moral greatness, who can doubt? The fulsomeness of Disraeli's letters to Queen Victoria is alone enough to condemn him.* In the whole story of Gladstone's life there are none of the unlovely things that disfigure the life of his rival; he would have been quite incapable of the latter's base behaviour to Peel. There is a lustre about Disraeli, but it is a kind of meretricious lustre, and time has already tarnished it. But the splendour of magnanimity still invests the memory of Mr. Gladstone as with a halo, and it will be long before it fades.

Supremely concerned as he was with the spiritual life of man, it was long before Mr. Gladstone turned his attention to man's material improvement, and even then nearly all the principal achievements of his life were in the direction of the removal of restraints on trade, and the reduction of expenditure, neither of which to-day is necessarily identified with "social reform," much of which is indeed to-day at once restrictive and spendthrift. The impulse to social reform in those days came not from his school, but from the utilitarian radicals

* As is now well known, of this sort of thing Queen Victoria could never have enough, and Disraeli was quick to discover it, as Mr. Lytton Strachey has shown us in his brilliant book. For such Oriental prostrations Mr. Gladstone had no taste, and Queen Victoria disliked his austerity. On that point I can contribute a footnote to history. There is a story, long current, that she once complained that Mr. Gladstone always addressed her like a public meeting, and I once asked the late Princess Christian if this were true. Her reply was, "I never heard the Queen say so, but she often complained that when Mr. Gladstone spoke to her, she felt like a little girl who had been put to stand in a corner with her face to the wall."

and the evangelicals; the Anglicans were largely indifferent to it. In their preoccupation with the soul of man, they forgot that, if the body is more than meat, it is by meat that it is sustained. Those who are well-fed can only too easily forget it, and from 1832 to 1867 the government of England was exclusively in the hands not only of the well-fed, but of the well-to-do. As late as 1854 Mr. Gladstone says of the Aberdeen Cabinet, "No Cabinet could have been more aristocratically composed; I myself was the only one of fifteen noblemen and gentlemen who composed it who could not fairly be said to belong to that class," but he was the kind of exception that proves the rule, for he was the son of a wealthy merchant who had been through the select preserves of Eton and Christ Church. Cobden's apparition in politics was far more remarkable; it was he, and not Gladstone, whose entry into Parliament was regarded as the intrusion of "a Gothic invader." Yet even Cobden was convinced as late as 1859 that "one must make up one's mind to accept certain things as a part of our English political existence," and among them "the Church and the Aristocracy, with whom the most powerful part of the middle classes will be found sympathizing, are great realities which will last for our life and our sons." It is indeed difficult for us to realize how stable, in spite of so many legislative changes, most of them beneficent, was the political society of those days; so stable that what to-day we should regard as little more than a ripple was looked on as a tidal wave. Men so different

in temper as Bagehot and Carlyle regarded the introduction of Household Suffrage as a catastrophe. "Never since the Heptarchy," wrote Carlyle, "was there so critical an epoch in the history of England." For Bagehot the golden age of Parliament was gone, never to return. Yet where the Victorians with such manifest trepidation enfranchised thousands we to-day enfranchise tens of thousands, sweeping away all restrictions of age, sex, and property qualification, with as little anxiety, and not much more thought, than we give to taking a railway ticket, except that in taking a railway ticket we know where we are going. One is not sure, despite the extravagance of Carlyle, that the advantage is not with the Victorians. They at least were free from our enervating levity of assent.

When one turns from the biography of Gladstone to that of Cobden one is at once conscious of a contraction of the field of vision. The vast range of interests of Mr. Gladstone's indefatigable and inquisitive mind—a range which, as his biographer truly observes, "moved among bulls and rescripts, briefs and pastorals and canon law, with as much ease as if he had been arguing about taxes and tariffs"—is exchanged for the tenacious concentration of a self-taught man of the middle classes upon one idea, the emancipation of the people of England from the fetters of the Corn Laws and all that they, for him, implied. It is indeed a complete change of scene. The *venue* is shifted from parliament to the platform; from the episcopal see to the humble parish; from Oxford quadrangles

to the village green. We seem to have exchanged the society of princes of the Church for the company of the fishermen of Galilee. As we follow Cobden in his apostolic progress up and down the country we seem to breathe a less sophisticated air, the wind of the rolling downs is in our nostrils, there is something in it of the invigorating atmosphere of Cobbett's *Rural Rides*. There is a savour of our English soil in this book, a robustness of our English character, and at times an extraordinary poignancy—witness that memorable scene in which Cobden, visiting the bereaved Bright in the home laid desolate by the death of his wife, calls him to arms with the reminder that in England there are thousands of homes yet more desolate. No more human political biography was ever written—I am not sure it is not, take it all in all, the best thing Lord Morley ever wrote, which is but to say that it is one of the best biographies in the language. For the theme is an inspiring one—it is the story of a great crusade which, whatever we may think of the economic doctrines of its leaders, was one of the noblest and most disinterested in political history, and was in itself a portent, as the shrewd author of *Coningsby* observed, " the introduction of that new principle and power into our Constitution which ultimately may absorb all, Agitation." For the first time in English history an extra-Parliamentary movement, promoted by humble and obscure men, gathering irresistible weight and momentum, forced upon a reluctant Parliament, only less oligarchical that its unreformed predecessors, an overwhelming change in the fiscal policy of the State and

the conditions of life among the people. Other agitations there had been and were, preceding it or running parallel with it; the Catholic Emancipation movement was one, the Chartist movement was another, and both, indeed, were portentous. But none touched the life of the people so closely as this. The " condition of England " was at that moment so critical as to have become itself a phrase on everyone's lips. The Factory system had sprung up like a vast and brooding cloud over the rural landscape, and with it such a condition of servitude, want, overcrowding, disease, and heavy-eyed despair as England had never known in all her social history. The condition of England in those days has been painted with the hand of a master, and the vision of a seer, in Disraeli's *Sybil*, and there is no reason to suppose that that terrible picture of the exploitation of the newly poor by the newly rich is overdrawn. " A wail of intolerable serfage," in the words of Disraeli, went up from the land. There was, as the same writer has remarked elsewhere, an enormous growth in wealth with no proportionate advance in our moral civilization. Population had grown amazingly—it had not outgrown wealth, but had outgrown its distribution. The altar of Mammon " blazed with triple worship." We are accustomed to think of the Victorian Age as the age of complacent wealth and opulent materialism, and the spectacle revolts us. What we forget is the heroic efforts made by men who were anything but complacent to cure the evils it brought with it. It is absurd to accuse the Victorians of insensibility to such things—the

roll of honour tells its own tale: Cobden, Mill, Arnold, Shaftesbury, Dickens, Ruskin, Carlyle were all alive to it, and each of them strove with all his might to awaken the public conscience, and striving, succeeded. Of them and many another like them it may be said what was so finely said of Gladstone: they so wrought that they kept the soul alive in England. Never, as Cobden's biographer rightly claims, was there an age in which the political spirit was more abroad in its most comprehensive sense—a "great wave of humanity" swept over it. Many of their solutions were, in our eyes, imperfect, and some of them, most notably Carlyle's, reactionary. Cobden, indeed, was, judged by modern standards, such a heretic that he declared he would rather live under the Dey of Algiers than under a Trade Union Committee, but many people are now beginning to ask themselves if he was so very far wrong. There was a manliness of character about Cobden and Bright which is none too common in the politics of our own day; neither of them ever truckled to the populace; they never hesitated to tell the people, if need be, that they were in the wrong, and Cobden could rightly claim that he had never talked "the cant of the superior judgment of the working classes." The *laissez faire* school had many faults, but it had one great virtue which we are in too much danger of forgetting in this age of eleemosynary legislation, and that virtue was the supreme importance it attached to the formation of character. There were other altars in the Victorian Age than the altar of Mammon. There was the altar

of Duty, and many were they who worshipped in its courts with a humble and a contrite heart.

To our own generation the Victorian Age seems as remote as the Elizabethan, but far less admirable. It has become the fashion to decry it. That brilliant iconoclast, Mr. Lytton Strachey, has led the way, and a whole crowd of younger writers have sought to imitate him, but their writings have " the nodosities of the oak without its strength, and the contortions of the Sybil without her inspiration." We no longer praise the great men of the Victorian Age, and the fathers that begat us. Such an exercise of filial piety has become wholly unfashionable. Their complacency irritates us ; their earnestness reproaches us ; their industry shames us. Their fearful preoccupation with the great mysteries of religion seems benighted to an age in which every other man carries a " mascot," an age which no longer fears God but is horribly afraid of Him. Worst of all, we are under so many obligations to them. We owe them and their age nearly everything which has made society humane and life tolerable. Mr. Birrell, than whom no one could have done it with a better grace, has declined the task of defending them against their youthful detractors, and the best he can say for them is that theirs was the age of " law reform " ! It is a somewhat astonishing limitation. There is hardly a sphere of influence in that hinterland of social activity which lies beyond the confines of mere politics which they did not reclaim and make their own by the title of effective occupation— Public Health, Education, the Factory Acts, Free

Trade, the Suffrage, the Co-operative movement, the Friendly Societies, all these and many more were the achievements of the Victorian Age. One has only to look back to the beginning to see what they accomplished. In the year of our Lord 1832, nay in 1837, the people of England were illiterate, hungry, diseased, exploited and unenfranchised. Their existence was like that State of Nature of Hobbes's fancy—nasty, poor, brutish and short. It was not merely that the penal law was disfigured by barbarous sanctions and the " Constitution " almost Venetian in its exclusiveness. Collective bargaining was enmeshed in the law of conspiracy, wages were below the minimum of subsistence, " Public Health " was regarded as an interference with the laws of nature, productive of nothing but an intolerable burden upon the rates, the Press was so harassed by imposts that the people were debarred from buying newspapers even if they had been able to read them. Factory operatives were mulcted of their wages by despotic fines and cheated of them by usury ; agricultural labourers were worse fed and worse housed than the beasts they herded. Children were as unknown to the law as the mediæval villein and not less rightless. Yet to many of the favoured few it passed for a truism that the only thing that was wrong with the condition of the people was that there were too many of them—" it was all a question of population." The State was not more steeped in darkness than the Church. To doubt the miracles or venture a question about the Pentateuch was regarded as a heresy to be visited with all the

pains of deprivation and excommunication; to pursue the researches of natural science without first accepting the Scriptural mythology of Creation was looked upon as communion with the devil. Even the passage of the Reform Act, which to the youthful Gladstone, before his own emancipation, seemed to be "the work of Anti-Christ," left six-sevenths of the male population without a vote. Upon a Society so constituted, a people so fettered, the Industrial Revolution had come like a thief in the night, and not the most devastating of wars, or the bloodiest, could have been more catastrophic in its social effects or more perplexing in the problems of social readjustment which it created. Out of a mediæval chaos, as of night, modern England was born, and the travail was great. And to the devoted efforts of Victorian statesmen, jurists, social reformers, men of letters, and men of science, we owe it that we live in an England in which thought is free, life is decent, public opinion is enfranchised, people are educated, children are protected. In a word, the social conscience was the creation of the Victorian Age.

Future generations will see the Victorian Age as what it was—the age of heroic enterprise and of an almost eponymous romance. In that age the son of a small tea factor, a poor medical student whose only bursary was the wages he had saved as a child operative in a cotton factory, having learnt the art of healing, voyaged overseas, and armed with nothing but a Bible and a small stock of medicines, penetrated into the heart of an Africa which had never been trodden by the foot of man. For years

he disappeared from his kind into the African night, as though he had gone down quick into the grave ; disarming fierce tribes " with a smile on his face," he thrust his way, often half delirious with fever and limping on ulcerated feet, over burning deserts and through pestilential swamps whose sharp reeds cut his flesh like razors, into a heart of darkness, and with no other clue than the aboriginal myths of unknown tongues discovered great rivers and equatorial lakes as though he carried a divining rod in his hand. He was his own smith, joiner and mechanic ; he taught himself how to navigate, make a survey and take a sounding, learnt native dialects unknown to the philologist and never lisped by a white man, and when the exile reappeared like a wraith among his own race, it was observed that he had almost forgotten the use of his mother tongue. In that age the son of a Gloucestershire squire, with no other resources than his own small patrimony and no other companion of his own race except a devoted wife, jealously keeping his destination to himself lest others should anticipate him, forced his way through stagnant marshes and over waterless wastes, pursued the secret Nile to its unknown source, and unveiled the mystery of the ages. In that age two young officers of the Indian Army, with a handful of men, sought the same goal in a perilous quest in unknown latitudes and among unknown tribes, disappearing for some three years so completely that they seemed lost as in a quicksand. In that age a young consular officer, stung to enterprise by the sight of " a huge white blot " on the map of Central and

Eastern Arabia, prepared himself by years of study of Oriental languages and months of seclusion in the arts of Oriental life, " studying every separate thing until he was a master of it," from the Eastern ceremonial of drinking a glass of water to the shoeing of a horse, and, disguised as a wandering Dervish, penetrated the forbidden shrine where no Christian foot had trod. All these men and others like them acted on no other incentive than their own impulse, received no countenance except that of their own stout heart, were never " backed " by a syndicate or subsidized by a government. The bodily risks they took in an age which knew nothing of tropical medicine, and when the science of bacteriology was almost unknown, when the white man's name conveyed nothing, whether of terror or prestige, to the savage tribes they encountered, are as unintelligible to us as they are inconceivable. Nearly all of them were men of a simple piety who never exalted their exploits, or if they did, saw in them nothing but the hand of God, and magnified His name. In the same mould were cast nearly all the heroes of that Indian Mutiny whose story is the epic of our race. Nor was their age and generation insensible to the romantic splendour of their achievement. The last home-coming of Livingstone was attended by all the pomp and glory of a conqueror; the flags of all the ships in port were at half-mast, every bell tolled a funeral note, and the cotton operative was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey amid the mourning of a nation. The spirit which animated him and all his heroic kind has been celebrated by

the Victorian laureate in lines which have the ring of immortality:

"Yet all experience is an arch, wherethro'
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rest unburnish'd, not to shine is use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains; but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought."

In those wistful lines with their haunting melody, we have the true expression of the tireless questing of the Victorian Age.

CHAPTER VI

THE *RECOLLECTIONS* *

AUTOBIOGRAPHY is the literature of confession—not, indeed, auricular confession but vociferous, with the world as its auditorium. It may be deliberately apologetic, and therefore combative, as in Newman's *Apologia*, or consciously imaginative, as in Goethe's *Truth and Poetry*. It may, as in Mill's *Autobiography*, tell the story of a mental crisis ending in victory, or, as in Renan's *Souvenirs*, the struggles of a dual nature ending in an uneasy truce. But in one and all the mood of the writer is the mood of introspection, morbid in Rousseau, serene in St. Augustine. Whether he be saint or artist, his testimony is a kind of history of the soul, its hopes and fears, its illumination and its darkness, its joy and anguish. Of all forms of literature it is the most intimate. Judged by this test there never was a book more reticent than the *Recollections* with which Lord Morley closed his literary career. It does not admit the reader to a single secret of the writer's heart. To the impressionable years of childhood and adolescence, which play so large a part in other autobiographies, wistful in one, plaintive in another, Lord Morley devotes but few words—barely four pages are given to the years

* The first paragraph of this chapter is here printed for the first time.

preceding his matriculation at Oxford. Of his parents little is recalled, and one looks in vain for such a pious portrait of a father as is to be found in the pages of Mill, or such a winning and graceful characterization of a mother as enchants the reader in the pages of Saint Augustine and of Renan. We do not know the home at Blackburn in the intimate way we know that charming house in the quiet street at Frankfurt. In only one passage in the book is there any approach to intimacy, and even that was a doubtful afterthought.* There is no hint of a spiritual crisis. There are no moods, whether of depression or of exaltation. There is hardly a hint of self-analysis, none of that engaging frankness which induces Renan to confide in the reader that he is a "tissue of contradictions . . . thinking like a man, feeling like a woman, and acting like a child." There are no visions such as came to the great father of the Church under the fig-tree. There are no affairs of the heart such as obsessed the youthful mind of Goethe. There are no escapades of the body such as outraged the biographer of Rousseau,† no lusts of the flesh. The temptations of adolescence, its emotional storms,

* *I.e.* the passage in vol. ii. pp. 361–362, quoted at the end of the present chapter. Even this Lord Morley was moved to omit in the proofs, but his publisher's better judgment prevailed.

† Lord Morley faced the "Confessions" unflinchingly, but there are certain incidents, upon which, as a biographer, he is forced to dwell, where one can almost see him holding his nose with the one hand while he grasps his pen like a scalpel with the other, as though he were making a post-mortem examination of a man who had already been dead a little too long. For example, of Rousseau's revelations of his erotic mania, "We turn away with disgust as from a vision of the horrid loves of heavy-eyed and scaly shapes that haunted the warm primæval ooze."

its querulous revolts, its alternations of certitude and doubt, of extravagant hope and equally extravagant fear—there is nothing of these. If he ever passed through the " savage forest,"

> " Questa selva selvaggia aspra e forte
> Che nel pensier rinnuova la paura,"

the perilous journey has left no trace in these pages. There are certain passages of reflection on this aspect of life in his *Rousseau* which may, or may not, have the same allegorical message as the first and second cantos of the *Inferno*, but it is idle to speculate. What is more important is the complete silence of the *Recollections* on the history of his beliefs. Even Mill, his master, was, with all his austerity, more communicative. The *Recollections* confine themselves rigorously to the writer's public activities, literary and political, screening with a veil, opaque and impenetrable, the *arcana* of his private life. The same instinct which induced him to forbid a " Life " moved him to disdain an autobiography. This reserve was characteristic, and it is our duty, in all that follows, to respect it.

Long before he entered politics he laid emphasis on the advantages of a life of action as a stimulus, if not a corrective, to a life of contemplation.* He has corrected the querulousness of Lecky on Democracy † with a reminder that the garland of political truth is not to be won except in the heat and dust of the arena, and like Mill ‡ he found in

* *Voltaire*, p. 17 : " Voltaire's books would not have been the powers they were but for this constant desire of his to come into the closest contact with the practical affairs of the world."

† *Miscellanies*, iv. 175.

‡ *Autobiography*, p. 85.

contact with permanent officials and parliamentary draughtsmen an intellectual athleticism that teaches a thinker both his own limitations and those of the people with whom he has to deal. But it none the less remains true that by temperament he was more of a thinker than a man of action. He made some great contributions to the sum of political achievement—of which more in a moment—during the last thirty years, and if, with Burke, we consider it no small part of a statesman's tasks " to know what to *avoid*," then his strenuous opposition to the coercion of popular sentiment in Ireland and South Africa must also be taken into account. Still it is as a thinker and a writer he is to be judged in the first instance, for what distinguishes him from all his political contemporaries is that he was a man of letters by vocation.

Judged in this light the *Recollections* are in some respects unique. Many English politicians have affected a graceful interest in letters, but to few has it been given to achieve real eminence in both literature and politics. Most of those who have achieved the one or the other have, like Mill and Macaulay, had to make election between the two. It would be difficult, and, I think, impossible to find a parallel in this country to careers like that of Guizot, Thiers, Tocqueville, and Hanotaux, men in whose case the study of History and Political Science seems to go hand in hand with the pursuit of Politics. The man of letters who enters the House of Commons has to live down a certain suspicion as a doctrinaire, and it is rarely that he succeeds. Burke, of course, stands in a class apart,

but his greatest speeches smack a little of the closet, and there is authority for believing that his audience too frequently thought of the dining-room in the midst of his splendid rhetoric. Lord Morley, on the other hand, seems from the first to have found himself at home in the House of Commons, and for many years he stood in the front rank as a debater. The secret of his success in that most exacting of all assemblies is no doubt to be sought in his training, his temperament, and what, for want of a better term, we may call his instinct for political casuistry, using that term in no invidious sense. His training was that of a journalist, and he edited the *Fortnightly Review* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* at a time when, as he himself has remarked,* the tradition of a kind of hieratic anonymity was passing away from journalism, and with its decline the influence of the journalist, and his sense of responsibility, increased rather than diminished. Perhaps the " ticklish " task of having to defend coercion editorially in the October of 1881 after opposing it in January was no bad training for the author of the essay on Compromise in those arts of accommodation which make politics what Lord Morley has himself called " one long second-best." But his temperament was also that of a man who finds a forensic stimulus in the clash of mind with mind. Of all men he would have been the last who could say with Hobbes, " If I had read as many books as most men, I should be as ignorant as they," but his deep and catholic study of literature was never exercised at the expense of social intercourse.

* *Studies in Literature*, pp. 332–335.

The first volume of this book might, indeed, not inaptly be called a treatise *De Amicitia;* it abounds in the most charming full-length portraits of friends in politics and literature—Meredith, Huxley, Mill, Acton, Herbert Spencer, Arnold, and Carlyle. More than that, however, both volumes are full of extraordinarily penetrating estimates of political colleagues and opponents, their virtues and their defects, the secrets of their success and of their failure—Chamberlain, Harcourt, Parnell, Gladstone, Campbell-Bannerman, Spencer, Lord Rosebery, Lord Haldane, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Balfour. They have all the shrewdness of Shelburne's portraits of his contemporaries without their malice. A man who could judge with such acumen the causes of political success, or the want of it, was bound to achieve it. Whether ideas or men count for most is one of the vexed—and we think one of the most idle and vexatious—questions of history ; history may or may not be what Carlyle called it—"the essence of innumerable biographies," but in politics as an art the knowledge of men is half the battle. As for what I have ventured to call Lord Morley's instinct for political casuistry, it has often been exhibited in his writings, and, although he takes exception to his friend Lord Acton's view of him as seeing nothing in politics but "the higher expediencies," there are many passages in his writings * on the art of politics—we will not be so profane as to take seriously his

* Cf. *Compromise*, p. 229. And cf. p. 26 : "Moral principles are only registered generalizations from experience." There is also a deprecation of Chamberlain's talk of "natural rights" on p. 158 of the *Recollections*.

comparison of Politics with Logic as being neither a science nor an art but a " dodge "—which would give Acton respectable grounds for his belief. Lord Morley's own choice to stay in the Cabinet in the cause of Home Rule rather than leave it with Mr. Gladstone in the cause of naval " retrenchment " is a case in point. In this we intend no reproach ; it was one of those cases of " hard alternatives," grave or divided responsibilities, critical balancings in sharp emergencies and clouded situations that, as he has elsewhere remarked, " press those who meddle with the government of men." * Politics are full of such economies ; we meet with them in the long, sinewy wrestle of Lord Morley with Lord Minto over the limits within which it was wise or justifiable to revive an old Regulation to deport Indian agitators or put the curb on a seditious Press. But we are left wondering furtively at times whether the author of the essay which exhorted men as to the imperative duty of not only making up their minds but of speaking them, did not smile to himself at the efforts of the Whips to preach silence to the " Indian group " of Radicals in the House, restive under the exercise of these arbitrary prerogatives.

No doubt another clue to Lord Morley's success in the House of Commons was his robust, not to say resolute, belief in representative institutions. That belief has been the burden of many of his political essays—on Machiavelli, on Maine, and on Lecky, for example. As Lord Randolph Churchill said of him, he " *believed* in the solution of political questions " and he believed in their solution by

* *Miscellanies*, iv. 187.

the forensic arts of Parliamentary Debate, and even the black magic of the Whips. It is not easy, however, to resist the conviction that he is concerned in this book to persuade himself quite as much as his reader.

"Much of Parliamentary debate is dispute between men who in truth and at bottom agree, but invent arguments to disguise agreement and contrive a difference. It is artificial, but serves a purpose in justifying the lobbies and a Party division. You have patiently to learn the wholesome lesson that wisdom may be wisdom even when she chooses rhetorical apparel. You cannot expect to escape a continual exhibition of the common error of politics, and of much besides, the attribution to one cause of what is the effect of many ; nor the vexation of listening to the wrong arguments for the right object. Above all, one often felt the pregnant truth that most mistakes in politics arise from flat and invincible disregard of the maxim that it is possible for the same thing to be and not to be. But then here, too, Parliament is only representative."

As against this sedative we may recall a certain passage in the essay on Compromise :

"The extension of the ways of thinking which are proper in politics to other than political matter means at the same time the depravation of the political sense itself, and the art of politics is growing to be as meanly conceived as all the rest. At elections the national candidate has not often a chance against the local candidate, nor the man of principle against the man of a class. In Parliament we are admonished on high authority that 'the

policy of a Party is not the carrying out of the opinion of any section of it but the general consensus of the whole,' which seems to be a hierophantic manner of saying that the policy of a Party is one thing and the principle which makes it a Party is another thing, and that men who care very strongly about anything are to surrender that and the hope of it for the sake of succeeding in something about which they care very little or not at all. This is our modern way of giving politicians heart for their voyage." *

This is certainly no less true now than when it was written some forty years and more ago. The arts of political management of opinion—stipendiary titles of honour, caucuses, " lobbying," and all the rest of it—have accentuated this subordination of the intellectual exercise of one's own volition to the supreme exigencies of Party. Lord Morley says somewhere in his new book that it is the great virtue of Party that it disciplines caprice, but a Party may have its caprices no less than an individual. Although no doubt, as Lord Morley is inclined to believe, the average of political intelligence stands higher in the House of Commons than ever it did, we are not at all sure that there is any corresponding degree of political independence. A Cobden or a Bright would probably find it impossible to maintain his parliamentary existence in these days. As a legislative instrument Parliament works harder, but we doubt if it works better than it did in that era from 1831 to 1867 which Bagehot regarded as the golden

* *On Compromise*, p. 107.

age of political intelligence. In those days Parliament made and unmade Cabinets, in these * Cabinets make and unmake Parliaments, and there was truth in the last words of Sir William Anson that legislative sovereignty may be said to have passed from the Commons to the Cabinet. Lord Morley says nothing of Parliament's control over foreign policy and, what amounts to much the same thing, its intelligent interest in it, although he could, we imagine, say much. He would, we are sure, have been the first to admit that the age is long past when one could say with Disraeli, " Show me your House of Commons, and I will show you your foreign policy," and we feel hardly less sure that he would have been the first to regret it. He has but one faint reference to Chamberlain's part in introducing into our political life that parasite on democracy, the caucus, whose malign activities M. Ostrogorski has exhibited to us at work in all modern countries, causing a slow corruption in the body politic. He has still the same ardent faith in democracy as he exhibited in the pages of his *Rousseau* and in his polemical essay on Maine and Lecky, but we are not sure that he distinguishes sufficiently between Democracy as a form of society and Democracy as a form of government. We may read in vain through these pages, as through the pages of his essay on " Democracy and Reaction," † for an answer to some of the riddles of

* This was written in 1918, and never was the ascendancy of the Cabinet over Parliament so high. To-day, *i.e.* in 1924, with a minority Government in power, we seem to have returned to the situation of earlier days.

† See the fourth volume of the *Miscellanies*.

Democracy and Liberty which so perplexed Acton and De Tocqueville. It is indeed, as I have previously remarked, Lord Morley's way to propound more questions than he answers, and the part of Socratic midwife is one which, with his immense reading and sinewy, dialectical mind, he is well qualified to play. The same negative, or perhaps secretive, attitude characterizes his utterances about Progress, a word of which Maine plaintively remarked that he had never yet been able to discover any definition. He remarks truly that the Victorian period was a great age of Progress in the amelioration of social conditions, and he has elaborated elsewhere in striking language the novelty of this conception * and the great conquests it has made in the sphere of thought and action. His early career was contemporaneous with the period when " the philosophical parenthesis " of a sterile transcendentalism came to an end and " an active faith in the improvableness of institutions " began to flourish ; when, as he says of Diderot, " political ideas were grasped as instruments." † Of that great movement he could legitimately say *quorum pars magna fui*, and not the least interesting of these pages are those in which he describes, as elsewhere,‡ the progressive " school of thought " associated with the *Fortnightly Review* under his editorship. But this is perhaps hardly the time to ask any oracle for a definition of Progress, and in the frightful retrogression of the War, when the issue between the

* *Politics and History*, pp. 82–93 ; *Miscellanies*, iv. 47–48.
† *Diderot*, pp. 8 and 185.
‡ *Studies in Literature*, " Valedictory," p. 323.

powers of light and the powers of darkness is still undecided, Machiavelli, with his belief that History moves in a weary cycle, has the laugh of all of us.

This, however, is something of a digression. If Lord Morley has little to say about politics as a science and its problems, he has much to say about it as an art. Here, as always, he is a staunch believer in his fellows. Like Guicciardini, he refuses to subscribe to Machiavelli's cynical saying that men are naturally bad, he insists that they are naturally good, though by nature weak. He is never embittered like De Tocqueville who, less fortunate than he in politics, saw in Democracy at best the advent of the mediocre, or like Taine, whose microscopic studies of the pathology of the French Revolution left him sceptical and despondent. Lord Morley escaped what he has called elsewhere the Sceptic's Progress—the sad declension of the disillusioned idealist into the cynic, and he has escaped it because he has cherished this belief in the natural goodness of men and has never succumbed to the insidious temptation of the politician to tell men merely what he thinks they would like to hear. In this respect it may be said of him, what he said himself of Cobden,* that he has escaped the greater danger of the platform orator's career. Effect was never with him the decisive consideration instead of truth, and there are few more bracing passages in this book than his story of how he faced—and subdued—a hostile Jingo audience in Manchester whom he sought

* *Life of Cobden*, chapter viii.

to convince that our South African policy towards the Boer republics was morally wrong.

Much the best part of the book from a literary point of view is, however, the part which is devoted not to politics but to literature. And this for a very simple reason. The volume which deals exclusively with politics is largely made up of political diaries and corespondence dealing with the daily and weekly progress of the writer's public activities, and this inevitably involves, as in the letters to Lord Minto, constant repetition. It is inevitable,* but it is unfortunate. The second volume is, in fact, rather the *disjecta membra* of a treatise on Indian Government—of which more in a moment —than a coherent piece of literature. It shows the writer as an *esprit positif* catechizing and exhorting the Governor-General, but it has the drawback of leaving us without the replies of the object of these admonitions, and even of leaving us a little in the dark at times as to what they were about. With the exception of a chapter on Lucretius, in every way worthy of its subject, the second volume is not to be compared in literary attractiveness with the first. The first volume is not only memorable for its graceful portraits of Victorian men of letters, but also for its frequent excursions into literary criticism—sometimes self-criticism. Lord Morley is, indeed, no indulgent critic of his own writings. In an illuminating excursion on style

* *Ibid.* : " A political or religious agitator must not be afraid of constant repetition. Repetition is his most effective instrument. The fastidiousness which is proper to literature, and which makes a man dread to say the same thing twice, is in the field of propagandism mere impotency."

he pleads almost apologetically that he never ran after words, that he was content with "Correctness." In truth his style is just what he says, as others have said before him, a good style should be, a "faithful reflection" of the writer's mind. His mind has that *justesse* which he admired so much in Mill,* and one may say of him in the words of Pascal, "Quand on voit le style naturel, on est tout etonné et ravi, car on s'attendait de voir un auteur et on trouve un homme." Take any passage at random—the passage on the beauty of holiness in the *Miscellanies*, the analysis of Burke's fame at the beginning of the monograph, the description of the Terror in the essay on Robespierre, and the truth of this as a characterization of Lord Morley's style will be evident.

This first volume also has its interest for all lovers of literature, and in particular of Lord Morley's contributions to it, in that it permits us to see the worker's choice of his subject and the motives which inspired it. Lord Morley is his own literary biographer as he is to some extent his own literary critic. He explains to us how his essay on Compromise was inspired by a desire to counteract that demoralizing habit of accommodation which was so marked a characteristic of Anglican churchmen in high places who subscribed to the Articles when they had lost all belief in them. The hypocrisy which underlay the University tests long survived their abolition; it had become too much of a habit. But Lord Morley's essay had a wider scope than this, and we are not sure that he does not

* *Miscellanies*, iv. 162.

underrate it in treating it as little more than the enforcement of a platitude necessary at the time. It is true, to some extent, as the great American jurist O. W. Holmes once said to me of his epoch-making book *The Common Law*, when I urged him to publish a new edition, that if a book does its work effectively it ought to die a natural death, because if men have absorbed it they will no longer need it. But the main thesis of the essay on Compromise needs constant enforcement because men are always apt to take beliefs on trust, and, as Maine remarked, never so much as under Democracy whose chief characteristic is its readiness to adopt vicarious opinions in preference to an intellectual exercise of its own volition.* The lasting justification of the essay on Compromise is to be found in the words of Pascal already quoted, " On se persuade mieux, pour l'ordinaire, par les raisons qu'on a soi-même trouvées, que par celles qui sont venues dans l'esprit des autres."

One of the qualities which strike a diligent reader of Lord Morley's literary work before he entered Parliament is its singular coherence. This was characteristic of the Victorian thinkers. There is a unity, a direct " political " purpose, which integrates all Mill's writings—the *Logic*, the *Political Economy*, the *Utilitarianism*, and the essays on Liberty and Representative Government, just as, in a very different connection, and with a very different purpose, there is a unity about the work of Maine.

* " The civilized man, like the savage, is a man of party, with a newspaper for a totem—and like the savage he is apt to make of it his god."—*Popular Government.*

But it was peculiarly characteristic of the school to which Lord Morley belonged, than which there probably never has been any school more zealously determined to regard, with Alexander Hamilton, the government of man as the greatest of all human studies. What Newman made their reproach* was their pride—the subjecting to human judgment of "first principles of whatever kind." They were determined to find reasons for the faith that was in them. Lord Morley was, if anything, distinguished from among them, and certainly from their immediate predecessors such as Bentham, by an attachment to the study of history no less than to philosophic speculation. His own contributions to History alternate, to adopt his classification of historians,† between the "statesman historian," as in his books on Gladstone, Cobden, Walpole, Cromwell, and Burke, and the "philosopher historian," as in his studies of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot. For a man not directly apprenticed to the now highly specialized art or science (we deliberately beg a question here) of the historian in these days when the garment of the Muse of History is divided between the palæographer, the numismatist, the philologist, the economist, the ethnologist, and the legal historian, he has shown an extraordinary feeling for the Historic Method. But after all, this feeling comes by faith, not by works, and long training in the technique of the scriptorium has more often than not destroyed a historian instead of making him ; he "cannot see

* The *Apologia*, Note A. on Liberalism, p. 318.
† *Voltaire*, p. 299.

the wood for the trees." The chapter on "History" in Lord Morley's *Voltaire* is an admirable example of his "historic sense." So is the chapter on the history of political speculation in his *Rousseau*,* a work which he here criticizes, quite undeservedly, as "not historic enough in spirit." It is just this feeling for History that distinguished him from the Agnostics of his generation in his attitude to the Catholic Church, and indeed to all great religious movements. We are not surprised to be told by him in these *Recollections* that many of them reproached him with "idealizing" the Catholic Church. He himself makes it a reproach against Voltaire that he never grasped the historic greatness and, relatively to certain periods of human growth, the historic goodness of that mighty hierarchy.† No one, indeed, whatever his religious beliefs, who has any sense of the development of the human mind could think otherwise. Much of the effectiveness of Lord Morley's polemics on Agnosticism lay in the fact that Newman's gibe against the Protestants—"to be deep in history is to cease to be a Protestant"—would have had no point against him as an Agnostic, for of all Agnostics he was one of the best equipped. But the explanation probably lies deeper than this. He had in his own way as profound a sense, though he does not discover it so easily, of a moral order in history as Acton, and he is more catholic in his search for it. Some of his most glowing pages are devoted to Calvin as the

* *Rousseau*, vol. ii. chap. iii., "The Social Contract."
† *Voltaire*, pp. 2, 40, 322.

founder of a moral order, " the positive education of the individual soul." * Only he sees that all those are systems which " have their day and cease to be." What is left ? A deep humanity, a strong religious sense of Duty as wearing the Godhead's most benignant grace, a wide charity, and above all that feeling of Pity the want of which he deplores in Meredith, and which for him finds its completest expression in that great saying of Bacon's, so often greeting us in Lord Morley's work. There are, indeed, many glimpses in this book of a large and generous nature, none more touching than when, as only too often, he has had to perform the last offices of friendship at the death-bed, or over the grave, of a cherished friend. His friendships were as catholic in their range as they were staunch in their quality. They embraced an extraordinary variety of men between many of whom there was little or nothing in common except their community of friendship with him.

One meets this discernment at every turn —whether in essays in the " experimental psychology " of Cabinet-making or in that conduct of a monthly *Review* which Lord Morley once described as demanding only less tact and patience than the management of an opera-house. But one wonders sometimes whether it is charity or a sense of decorum that induces Lord Morley to reveal so little of the " back-chat " of politics, its intrigues, heart-burnings, feuds and jealousies. He glides lightly over the feuds of the days of the Liberal League, only permitting himself a rare reference to

* *Miscellanies*, iv. 122.

the events of 1915 in an ironical reflection on the failure of the apostles of " efficiency " to conduct the War without seeking the collaboration of their opponents. But if we are to judge by a recent *Life* there was, according to Dilke, only one member of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet who was not jealous. True, one somewhat distrusts the authority when one learns from the same source that the exception was Dilke himself. But the political memoirs of the nineteenth century, although they do not exhibit the violent recriminations of the eighteenth, are full of evidences that, as Lord Morley himself says in the essay on Guicciardini, " The cases are rare where politics do not rather contract than expand the range of human interest and feeling." The mind is subdued to what it works in. We seem to see in this book a good deal of evidence that Lord Morley was very frequently in demand as an " honest broker " to compose the feuds and jealousies of his colleagues. It is refreshing to find that these experiences have not induced in him that mood of cynicism which is so characteristic of the Florentine publicists in their reflections on the art of dealing with men.

Moreover, with the displacement of the House by the platform—and no one did more to shift the venue than Gladstone—the intrigues of the lobbies have been supplemented by the histrionics of the public meeting. The Idols of the Tribe and the Market-place have dominated the mind of the politician. He has been tempted to put his opinions up to the highest bidder—not always, we admit, successfully, as Lord Morley remarks of one

pushful member of the species. There seems no place in the House of Commons to-day for an independent educator of public opinion like Mill. This is one of the defects of Democracy. Whether it be true or not, as De Tocqueville contends, that democracies will only tolerate an intellectual mediocrity, it is certainly true that a man who is a supple, acoustic echo of current opinion flourishes in them as in no other form of polity. It has been said of a certain very successful politician of to-day that he lives by his intuitions and that an audience goes to his head like wine. Certainly there never was a time when the people were more in need of political education and less inclined to receive it. As Acton said with his usual profundity, democracies are of all societies least tolerant of opinion just because they are most dependent on it. But as regards Lord Morley's own career he was entitled to contend that this has not been his own experience. He practised very few economies of truth in the expression of his own opinions, whatever capitulations he may have made in the matter of their enforcement. His persistent refusal to change or conceal his opinions on the Eight Hours' question is a case in point. But it cost him his seat at Newcastle none the less. The days are gone when a Member of Parliament could claim, like Burke, that he represented not merely his constituency but the nation. But then, if we recollect rightly, Burke's contention met with little countenance from the electors of Bristol.

Apart from its literary excursions and the fragment (we can call it nothing else) on Indian

reforms, the main interest of the book lies in its studies of character. The most finished portrait is undoubtedly that of Meredith : it gives us the clue alike to his attraction and his repulsion—an eager, buoyant spirit, as lyrical in his conversation as in his poetry, and yet at times as forced and as affected as in his prose. The reader of Meredith's published letters must have been struck by the contrast between the direct simplicity of the letters addressed to an intimate friend like Lord Morley and the preciousness—it might almost be called the coxcombry—of the letters addressed to the young ladies of title who courted his friendship. We find the explanation in Lord Morley's picture of Meredith as a conversationalist ; with a friend he was simple, manly, direct ; the moment he had an audience he was histrionic. But as a whole the picture of him is one of a radiant personality. None the less we cannot but feel that there is something harsh and pagan in his resolute optimism, something almost hedonistic. There is more of humanity, just because there is more of pity, in the great and tender genius whose profound sense of the tragic irony of life Meredith brushes so lightly aside in Lord Morley's book—Thomas Hardy, who will be read long after Meredith is forgotten. There is a glimpse of Herbert Spencer which is at once ludicrous and pathetic. As the shadows of death closed upon him at Brighton, his Agnosticism was shaken by the persistency and immanence of Space, and he wrote to Lord Morley seeking comfort in his perplexity. The recipient of the letter made a special journey to Brighton to console him with the

reflection that Space was a subjective impression, and was reproached with presenting him with a Kantian postulate as his *viaticum !*

When we come to the character-studies of politicians we are at once conscious of a contraction of the field of vision. Parnell and Chamberlain attracted Lord Morley—perhaps for the same reason as Strafford and Cromwell attracted him : they were resolute men of action who knew their own minds.* Moreover, the sombre fate of one of them, namely Parnell, presented a dramatic illustration of the play of that element of " accident," or *fortuna* or τύχη, which invests history with so much of its romance and all its fatality. One remembers Burke's striking figure of speech, in the *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, of the way in which " a face at an inn " has changed the course of history. But although Lord Morley's admiration for Parnell is obvious, he fails to make us share it. The impression remains of a figure, as Lord Bryce has somewhere described it, at once cold and callous. We cannot avoid a suspicion that in any other party than the Irish, Parnell would have failed ; his mind was uncultivated, his sympathies narrow, his temperament dark and suspicious. The portrait of Chamberlain is infinitely more attractive.

The second of these volumes deals with a vital subject which is likely to occupy more and more of public attention in the future—the Government of India. This is a matter which demands some closeness of attention, for the end is not yet.

* Cf. *Voltaire*, p. 18 : " Voltaire rated literature, as it ought to be rated, below action."

Lord Morley's tenure of office as Secretary of State for India will always be memorable for the reforms which resulted in the admission of a Native Member to the Viceroy's Executive Council, the appointment of two Native Members to the Council of the Secretary of State for India, and the reconstitution of the provincial councils on a predominantly representative basis. These were great reforms and courageous, and none more courageous than the admission of a Native Member to the Viceroy's Executive Council ; in carrying it Lord Minto had to encounter the opposition of his own Council, and Lord Morley the disapproval of such experienced colleagues as Ripon, Elgin, and Fowler. Lord Morley is more than justified in quoting Lord Hardinge's testimony, that " the vast political development " and improvement in the temper of India in the years that have elapsed " is an outcome of the reformation of the councils undertaken by Lord Morley and Lord Minto." All this must be admitted. But the wisdom of Lord Morley's attitude on other, and in a sense larger, problems of Indian policy is more open to question, especially in the light of the Great War. Readers of the Mesopotamia Report will remember its deliberate conclusion that the disasters in Mesopotamia were, among other things, due to the passion for economy, amounting to parsimony, in the Indian Government, which led it to " struggle hard to carry on war upon a peace budget." For this Lord Morley was not, of course, directly responsible, as he resigned the seals in 1908, and it was not till much later that the Home Government, in spite of the

alarming developments in the European situation in 1911, deliberately limited the improvement of the Indian Army by the imposition of an arbitrary maximum of expenditure. But one traces the same attitude of mind in Lord Morley's letter to the Viceroy of January 8, 1908, in which he says :

"In a poor country like India, economy is as much an element of defence as guns and forts, and to concentrate your vigour and vigilance upon guns and forts, and upon a host of outlying matters in Tibet, Persia, the Gulf, etc., which only secondarily and indirectly concern you, even as garrisons, seems to me a highly injurious dispersion from the other and more important work of an Indian Government. Then again, notwithstanding all you say about the Man on the Spot, I humbly reply that this is just what the Government of India is not. China, Persia, Turkey, Russia, France, Germany—I have never been able to understand and never shall understand, what advantages the G. of I. has for comprehending the play of all these factors in the great game of Empire. On the contrary, the G. of I. is by no means the Man on the Spot." *

Let us consider this a little closely. Lord Morley's conception of the relations of the Secretary of State to the Viceroy and his Council was, it is clear from various passages † in this book, that of the generation of Mill and Argyll, who held that

* Lord Morley to Lord Minto : *Recollections*, ii. 242.

† *E.g.* vol. ii. pp. 178, 264, and cf. the approving reference to the Duke of Argyll's views on p. 244. Argyll's view (see the quotation from him in Irengyar's *Indian Constitution*, p. 147) was that the Government of India is "merely the executive officer of the Home Government."

the Viceroy was merely the servant of the Secretary of State. They exalted the authority, as Lord Morley exalts it (see pp. 178, 232, 264), of the Viceroy not in order that the Viceroy might be stronger but that his Council might be weaker. They seem to have suspected, with reason, that the Viceroy would grow with the growth and strengthen with the strength of his Council. The more that Council approached to the position of a Cabinet, with the Viceroy as Prime Minister, the more independent of the Secretary of State would the Viceroy become. He would be able to treat as something of an equal with the collective authority of a council of colleagues behind him. Now it is undeniable that the constitutional development of India during the last twenty years, with some interludes, has been steadily in the direction of the autonomy of the Viceroy's Council. Even before that period, Strachey, an acute student of Indian institutions, remarked on the change in the status of the councillors from that of mere advisers to heads of important departments of State. It is true that the Viceroy's Council is not—and never can be until the change is effected by statute—responsible to the Legislative Council, much less to the people of India ; it is responsible to the English Cabinet through the Secretary of State, and ultimately to the English people, as represented in Parliament. But that responsibility has, with the development of the Viceroy's Council into a quasi-Cabinet, tended to relax. In 1894 the Viceroy (Lord Elgin) and his Council were compelled by the Secretary of State to withdraw their vote on

the Indian Cotton Duties Bill and to support a countervailing excise; in 1916 the exact converse took place—the Viceroy and his Council originated the very policy which they had been compelled to abandon in 1894, and the Secretary of State (Mr. Austen Chamberlain) withdrew the traditional opposition of his office and pleaded the plenary inspiration of the Viceroy's Council as his mandate. The only way a Secretary of State can counteract this constitutional tendency is to persuade the Viceroy not to consult his Council at all, because the exercise of the Viceroy's veto upon the decisions of his Council has long been falling into disuse. This appears to have been the drift of Lord Morley's persuasions. For example, he writes (in reply to the Viceroy's contention that the Government of India should be consulted about the Anglo-Russian agreement):

"If you mean the Government of India in a technical sense—as the G.G. in C.—I must with all respect demur. For one thing, the G.G. is his own Foreign Minister, and the Foreign Department is under his own immediate superintendence. Second, with sincere regard for the capacity of your Council, I fail to see what particular contribution they could make to questions of frontier policy."*

Now let us turn to the Mesopotamia Commission's report:

"The substitution of private for official telegrams (between the Secretary of State and Viceroy) tends

* *Recollections*, ii. 178.

to dispossess the Council of its functions which by Statute they are entitled to exercise. . . . *We have been informed by two members of the Governor-General's Council that according to their recollections the Council were never consulted as to, nor were they privy to, the campaign in Mesopotamia.* . . . If the old practice of having recourse to an official despatch had been adopted, and a despatch had been written at the outset with the full authority of the Secretary of State *in Council*, conveying to the Governor-General the rumours and the nature of the doubts which had arisen as to the condition of the wounded, and such despatch had been received by the Governor-General *in Council*, the circulation of such despatch *amongst both Councils* would have accelerated an investigation and prevented a great deal of the distress and suffering which occurred during that period. . . . As the Council of the Governor-General was not consulted, it is clear they cannot be held responsible for what occurred in the Mesopotamia campaign. On the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief must rest the sole responsibility." *

We see here the results of the policy of turning the Council out of doors in matters of foreign policy, and the auricular use of private telegrams and letters to whisper in the ear of the Viceroy (and Lord Morley obviously availed himself very largely of these informal communications) is one of the instruments of that policy. The parochial view of her Imperial responsibilities which India took during the Mesopotamia campaign is, to my mind, very largely the result of the denial to her,

* *Report of the Mesopotamia Commission*, pp. 102–3.

and in particular to the Viceroy's Council, of any voice in foreign policy. In this respect we cannot but think Lord Morley's policy was reactionary. To narrow your institutions at the top while liberalizing them at the bottom savours a little too much of Prussian "reforms." The Indian Government was, to borrow a phrase from Lord Justice Farwell's words * about our African protectorates, lowered to the level of "a Parliamentary despotism." How far this policy of inducing the Viceroy to ignore the Viceregal Council was accompanied by a policy on the part of the Secretary of State of ignoring his own Council, we do not know. What we do know is that Lord Morley's successor at the India Office deliberately made an attempt, by the abortive Council of India Bill, to abolish the Council of the Secretary of State as a consultative body altogether; had Lord Crewe succeeded, the strange dictum † of a certain judge that there was "no such person" as the "Secretary of State for India *in Council*" would have become an accomplished fact. Had these tendencies—reactionary tendencies we think them—continued, the Secretary of State and the Viceroy would have divided the government of India between them, impersonating the parts of Messrs. Spenlow and Jorkins, and there can be no doubt who would have been the sleeping partner. It would have been the unfortunate Viceroy.

There is a good deal to be said for Lord Morley's policy in one respect, and it is this—the Viceroy's Council would, almost certainly, have opposed the

* In *Rex* v. *Crewe*. † In *Frith* v. *the Queen*.

introduction of the Native Member. But once appointed, his appointment was an argument for strengthening the functions of the Viceroy's Council, instead of weakening them. And time and policy, we think, are against Lord Morley's conception of these functions. The recent resolution of the Viceroy's Council in favour of direct representation at the Imperial Conference, and the welcome extended to the representatives by the Dominion Premiers when they duly appeared there, show unmistakably the natural drift of events. The grievances of India as to the Asiatic problems in the Dominions are much more likely to receive a favourable solution if the status of the Indian Government is thus raised to some degree of correspondence with that of the Dominions. There are limits, of course ; limits set by the fact that India is not—and probably for a very long time cannot be—conceded the full status of a self-governing Dominion. But that is no reason why we should march in the opposite direction. We cannot think that Lord Morley's " wicked thought," as he terms it, that " Strafford was an ideal type, both for governor of Ireland in the seventeenth century, and governor of India in the twentieth century " was a happy inspiration. Lord Morley tells us, not altogether with disapproval, earlier in the book that he was once compared to St. Just. The comparison is interesting. It reminds us of the aphorism of a famous French writer that " no one is so like a clerical as an anti-clerical."

The book closes with " a word of epilogue " which is certainly one of the most beautiful, as it is

one of the most inspiring, passages in modern literature. In the evening of his days the writer walks the Surrey uplands with his little dog pausing inquiringly at his feet, "eager to resume her endless hunt after she knows not what, like the chartered metaphysician." He muses on the eternal mystery of existence and on the flight of the human soul through time—brief, transient, bewildered, like the passage of the fugitive swallow of the Anglo-Saxon fable through the lighted hall of the King's Thegns, coming one knows not whence, going one knows not whither :

"No Angelus across the waves reached my Surrey upland, but the church bells ringing out with pleasant cheerfulness for evening service from the valley down below, recalled the bells of Lytham, where in the quiet churchyard in the wood by the Lancashire seashore are the remains of those who began my days. A vaguely remembered passage of Chateaubriand floated into my mind about church bells : how they tell the world that we have come into it, and when we leave it ; into what enchanted dreams they plunge us—religion, family, native land, the cradle, the tomb, the past, the future."

CHAPTER VII

*POLITICS AND HISTORY**

Les vrais hommes de progrès sont ceux qui ont, pour point de départ, un respect profond du passé. Tout ce que nous faisons, tout ce que nous sommes, est l'aboutissant d'un travail séculaire.—RENAN, *Souvenirs d'Enfance et de Jeunesse.*

IN a passage of mournful and haunting beauty the aged Renan reminds us of the importunity of childhood's memories; at times there arose from the depths of his heart, like the muffled tones of the submerged belfries of legendary churches on the Breton coast, the plaintive appeal of old forgotten far-off things, summoning him to his prayers. He could not choose but hear, and with noble eloquence he pleads with the men of affairs to love the past even as they hope for the future; to believe that they may seek new truths without forsaking the old, and that at least we owe it as a courtesy to our fathers to admire where we will not imitate and to bow where we cannot pray. The intercession is characteristic. Here, as elsewhere, Renan seems to mediate between the old school and the new.

* The reader is invited to remember that this chapter was written in 1914 on the appearance of Lord Morley's *Notes on Politics and History*. The writer has thought it better, especially in view of Lord Morley's comments, reproduced on an earlier page of this book, on this chapter to reprint it in its original form.

The child of tradition, he had become its most destructive critic, and as his Church had appealed to history, so he answered her. In him the historic method achieved almost its first, and perhaps its greatest, triumph, and hardly had he done his work before he paled at the sight of it.

Perchance he had reason. It is indeed open to argument whether the inductive method of treating institutions, introduced by the Historic Method, has not been as great an instrument of dogmatism as the method of deduction which it displaced. The victors of that method gave no quarter, and races and religions alike went down before them. Nothing was so characteristic of its triumph in all fields of speculation a generation or two ago as the zeal with which men set themselves to make History the handmaid of "Politics." History, it was argued, showed an irresistible "tendency" in a cherished direction, and different historians at different times discovered an inexorable movement from status to contract, communism to individualism, aristocracy to democracy, authority to liberty, custom to law, myth to religion, religion to morality. Others, again, have seen in history the divine hegemony of a race or the apotheosis of a creed.* Never was there such a confusion of tongues since the day of Pentecost. The one thing in which all were agreed was that nothing has succeeded like success. That the race is always

* As to race one might quote a hundred historians of the Germanist school. As to religion let a single instance out of a thousand suffice: "To be deep in History is to cease to be a Protestant" (Newman, *Essay on Development*, p. 8).

to the swift and the battle to the strong is a maxim to which, as it suited their occasion, writers so different in temper and outlook as Mommsen, Treitschke, Fustel de Coulanges (to say nothing of a score of others) have each in turn subscribed. It is of this appropriation of history to politics that Stubbs must surely have been thinking when he satirized the attempt of men to prove that " all things would have been exactly as they are if everything had been diametrically opposite to what it was." * Truly history is an intractable thing, and even Treitschke, who did more than any one else to apply Schiller's famous aphorism *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht* (" the history of the world is the world's judgment ") is forced to confess that, as in the trials of early law, the " judgment " rests very largely with the parties and is not always above suspicion. Dead men tell no tales, and " trial by battle " wears a conclusive air as to the merits of old controversies. The maxim in his hands, as in those of so many others, becomes little more than a variation of the trite and cynical saying that every nation gets the government it deserves. The manifest *injustice* at times of the world's history he only escapes by the ingenuous reflection that the law " holds good in the long run," and by the admission that progress is not in a straight line but in a series of " spirals." †

It is surely the height of arbitrariness to assume that we are wiser merely because we are later, or that the civilizations which have perished therefore

* Stubbs, Rolls Prefaces, p. 185.
† Treitschke, *Politik*, s. 10.

deserved to perish. There is retrogression as well as progress in history, and Tel-el-Amarna, Susa, and Knossos should teach us that the extinction of a culture may cost the human race very dear and compel it to learn many things in religion, jurisprudence, and art all over again, before it can take up the thread of "Progress" at the point to which the displaced peoples had brought it. Where the polemical historian sees "the immortal working of the moral powers of history"—*das unsterbliche Fortwirken der sittlichen Mächte der Geschichte* *—it is equally possible for others to see waste, cruelty, the destruction of moral ideals, and the permanent conversion of Europe into an armed camp. It is idle to condemn the men of the past after the event—to accuse them of short-sightedness, security, or pacifism merely because it was upon them that the tower of Siloam fell. This is no less true of the history of thought than of the history of action. The historian must always be on his guard against a dogmatic rationalism in his criticism of early beliefs, and an intolerant contempt for them. It is no bad rule to hold with Fustel de Coulanges that the more unfamiliar, the more forlorn, the more repugnant, early ideas are to our own, the more we should believe them—understanding by belief not adherence but credit. Unfamiliarity is often the hall-mark of antiquity. This enlightened tolerance towards the past was never better exemplified than in Baur's treatment of the Miracles. For him the important thing is not whether what the disciples believed was "true,"

* Treitschke, *Was fördern wir von Frankreich?* p. 7.

but whether they truly believed it. This is the real distinction between the historian of dogma and the dogmatist. The historian, as Harnack reminds us, has to remember that the miraculous is always relative to the state of contemporary knowledge.

If, therefore, by truth we mean not veracity, which is primarily the historian's business, but value, which is the pursuit of the philosopher, then we must recognize that as a law of life history has its limits. The rules of conduct, whether public or private, political or ethical, secular or religious, must be sought and found, where Kant sought them, in the investigation of the content of one's own experience. These are things which each generation of men must work out for themselves ; it may be with fear and trembling. History cannot perform for us the office of philosophy. It is not a criticism of life, though it may occasionally supply the materials for one. Even when we have advanced from the conception of the historian's object as *Was ist geschehen* to *Wie es eigentlich gewesen*, from " *What* happened " to " *How* or why it actually happened," from the descriptive to the causal, we are still a long way from the imperious contemporary problem, " What *ought* to happen ? " The " laws " of history are laws of generalization, not commands of perfect obligation. To regard them otherwise is to put a yoke upon free-will and to substitute an otiose acceptance of the past for the enterprise of the human spirit.

> " Man is his own star, and the soul that can
> Render an honest and a perfect man
> Commands all time, all influence, all fate ;
> Nothing to him comes early or too late."

Is it not possible that it was of this exacerbation of contemporary politics and theology by historians, wearing the livery of parties and sects, that Renan was thinking when he pleaded for a more reverent attitude towards the past? Truly it would be no bad way of learning charity to our neighbours to begin by learning it towards our ancestors. Successful or unsuccessful, they were not the blind tools of impersonal forces which we alone have subdued to our imperious yoke, as some of us would have the rest of us believe, and we may be at least as fallible as they. Possibly, indeed, we are more fortunate; we have an eager expectation about the future which was denied to them; we believe in the progress of the human mind if we believe in nothing else, and historians of repute are already telling us to write history with an eye on the future. "J'aime le passé," said Renan; "mais," he adds wistfully anticipating the triumphs of modern science, "je porte envie à l'avenir." No one now believes, with Thucydides and Machiavelli, that "the future will in all probability resemble the past," or that the world is for ever moving in cycles. We have an immense belief in our capacity for consciously directed development. That, perhaps, is indeed the reason why we are always appropriating the past to our present controversies. "We shall always want," Mr. Bradley has told us,* "and we shall always have, new metaphysics." The same seems to be true of schools of history. If, indeed, the philosophy of history is, in the language of Hegel, "nothing but a thoughtful consideration of

* *Appearance and Reality*, p. xiii.

it," then this continual readjustment of our point of view towards her is certainly inevitable and may possibly be wholesome.

> "Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben
> Der täglich sie erobern muss."

There will be—nay, there already is—a division of labour in the field of history; on the one side the "colligators of facts," the palæographer, the numismatist, the philologist, the ethnologist, the economist, the legal historian; on the other, the thinker of wide vision and large discourse who interprets their labours and synthesizes their results. It is better that the specialist historian should stick to his last and leave the philosophy of history to those who can bring to the reading of her secrets a wide knowledge of men and affairs, a deep tolerance of human infirmity, and that immense patience which is the secret of all true statesmanship. Lord Morley has all these gifts and he has them in abundance, and his political experience has cured him—if indeed he ever had it—of that peculiar infirmity of the scholar's mind—a contempt for the activities of his own day and generation, a contempt which is too often accompanied, curiously enough, by an impatient faith in the weapons of force, for there is no one so violent on occasion as your man of speculative habits.

In these *Notes on Politics and History* Lord Morley has delivered himself of a searching criticism of contemporary civilization, and if he is often elusive he never fails to be suggestive.

He propounds far more questions than he answers. The indolent reader had, therefore, better leave this book alone, for it will assuredly more often provoke him than satisfy him. But a more bracing challenge to exercise his wits the thoughtful reader could not desire. If we were asked to put in a word the aspect of contemporary civilization which seems to have most strongly impressed itself upon Lord Morley in these pages, we should say it was turbulent change. Indeed, the student of public affairs cannot fail to remark to-day an enormous impetus to legislative innovation, coupled, by no means inconsistently, with an impatience of legal restraint. Were Maine alive to-day he would find it difficult to maintain his favourite thesis that nothing is so characteristic of democracy as conservatism. "A vast and mobile electorate," to adopt Lord Morley's expression, is clamorous for change, and, in its eagerness to subdue all things to its mood, will scarcely tolerate the legal and political institutions that have served the less impatient humours of their fathers. In America and in England alike there is a revolt against representative government as a slow and antiquated thing; in the one, as in the other, a rapid current in the direction of the substitution of the mandatory delegate of a trade union or of a "primary" for the representative of a constituency, an imperative demand for *ad hoc* legislation as a means of settling industrial disputes or composing the feuds of the trust and the consumer. In this country the trade unions have demanded—and have obtained—a complete immunity from civil liability for the acts of their

agents, with results that may well be described as startling * ; in Australia † and in the United States bold legislative experiments are being, or have been, attempted to control a maximum price. In our own country we are attempting to establish a minimum wage. The whole trend of modern legislation marks, as I have ventured to say elsewhere, a progress from contract to status—the legal relations of parent and child, of husband and wife, of employer and workman, of doctor and patient, of landlord and tenant, are all undergoing a change in the direction of legislative regulation. Whether these changes keep pace with or outpace the development of individual character, is an anxious and urgent question. In spite of this tendency to increase the functions of the State—perhaps because of it—there is everywhere what Lord Morley aptly calls a " latter-day antinomianism," an increasing disrespect for constituted authority —civil commotion in Ulster, " sympathetic " strikes in one or more of our great industrial towns, hints at revolution by our Conservative Party, and threats, and more than threats, of a " sex war " by the champions of Women's Suffrage. Men are at one and the same time eager for legislation and impatient of law. Meanwhile each of the great political parties is competing with the other in talk of profound constitutional reconstruction of the Referendum, of " Federalism," and of a new Second Chamber.

* See, for example, *Vacher* v. *London Society of Compositors*, A. C. (1913), p. 107.

† *The King and the A.-General of the Commonwealth* v. *the Adelaide Steamship Co.*, A. C. (1913), p. 781.

Where in all this ferment of change are we to look for persuasion, if not for authority? Lord Morley bids us look to the influence of educated opinion, and his message was directed, happily enough, to one of those great provincial Universities which represent one of the most hopeful developments of our time. In them, if anywhere, is, he thinks, to be found the corrective to otiose and second-hand opinions. Maine was no sympathetic student of Democracy, but he was undoubtedly on strong ground when he urged against it that its greatest weakness was its passion for fluent generalizations and its enervating "levity of assent."

"Crowds of men can be got to assent to general statements, clothed in striking language, but unverified and perhaps incapable of verification; and thus there is formed a sort of sham and pretence of concurrent opinion. There has been a loose acquiescence in a vague proposition, and then the People, whose voice is the voice of God, is assumed to have spoken." *

True, indeed, and the trouble is that, as Machiavelli † characteristically remarked, it is very plausible to liken the voice of the people to the voice of God, because widespread beliefs tend to bring about their own fulfilment. It is this substitution of perceptual experience for conceptual experience, of apprehension for thought, that has impressed itself most deeply upon modern students of society, and a whole school of thinkers—Bagehot, Tarde, Le Bon, Ostrogorski—have devoted

* *Popular Government*, p. 108. † *Discorsi*, i. 58.

themselves to studying Democracy as the field of exploitation of a kind of vague, subconscious, and wholly unthinking opinion, blowing where it listeth, now hot, now cold, alternately tempestuous and quiescent. The congregation of men in large cities, the growth of a community able to read without being able to think, the cheap Press, rapid locomotion, constant fluctuation of wages and prices, have all tended to minister to this instability of mind. Not reason, as in the rarefied pages of Aristotle and Locke, but instinct, suggestion, mimicry, habit, are now the field of study in political science.* The " State of Nature " instead of being behind us, is always with us because society is continually reverting to type. *Aliud agens populus*—the mind of the people is prone to incorrigible vagrancy.

For this habit of loose thinking and vicarious reasoning the chief corrective is, as Lord Morley insists, a re-examination by our Universities of the foundations of political belief, and, above all, the refinement of our political vocabulary. We are glad he has touched on this, and we could wish he had pursued it. Every day we use terms like " right," " liberty," " representation," " property," without any appreciation of what we mean. Nearly

* Political science has thus become an empirical science, but has only become such at the expense of losing its certitude, if not its solvency. As an acute thinker has remarked, " The empirical sciences are in the same position as many a commercial house of uncertain credit ; so long as they are only called upon to meet current obligations as they arise, they are solvent, but a sudden demand for immediate liquidation in full of all outstanding claims spells irremediable ruin."—Taylor, *The Problem of Conduct*, p. 184.

all of them have, like most political terms, a legal pedigree, and were originally capable of an exact and definite meaning; but the currency is constantly being debased to new and alien uses. As Cornewall Lewis acutely remarked, the tendency of popular use is to untechnicalize technical terms, and, "like an animal imperfectly domesticated, a technical term of this sort in politics is perpetually in danger of losing its refinement and reverting to a state of wildness." * Hence the weakness of political science in comparison with the natural sciences. Politics is at once an art and a science, and it has to use the same terms indiscriminately for both. On the other hand, the effect of modern legislation is to take words out of their popular usage and appropriate them to a legal purpose; the term "workman" has now come to have a definite legal connotation, as the result of legislation like the Workmen's Compensation Act, which in no long time will react upon its political use. The term "liberty"—of which Lord Acton said there were two hundred definitions, and for which he spent a lifetime in seeking a new one—has a long legal pedigree, the investigation of which would illuminate an interminable controversy. No one, I believe, has yet pointed out the curious change by which it passed from a concrete form into an abstract one, from the plural into the singular, from "liberties" into "liberty," and therewith from meaning something objective to something subjective. In its mediæval use it meant the

* *Treatise on the Methods of Observation and Reasoning in Politics*, chap. iv. section 6.

appropriation by an individual or a corporation of a portion of public power, usually in the form of an exemption from public authority, and it cannot be doubted that this association had much to do with the purely individualistic and negative conception of liberty which so long enjoyed authority with English thinkers, from Locke to Mill, as opposed to the more philosophic conception of liberty as a social conception—*i.e.* a self determined by its relations to the larger whole of society.* So, too, with the term "right," which is coloured by its use at the hands of English lawyers as something capable of being *possessed* by defiant individual appropriation, and which has led to our treatment of such essentially public things as peerages, advowsons, offices, and even electoral rights, as "things" assimilated to the law of real property. The fact is, we are still struggling in our political discussions with a conception of the relation of the individual to the State which proceeds on the legal doctrine of protection of possession. Hence the slow recognition of property as something which has a social character which not only bestows rights but imputes duties, and whose justification, as Dr. Rashdall puts it in a notable book † that has just appeared, "must depend upon no *à priori* principle but upon its social effects." In Germany, where juristic speculation has been much

* This latter view owes most in this country to T. H. Green's *Principles of Political Obligation*, and Bosanquet's *Philosophical Theory of the State*.

† *Property : its Duties and Rights—Historically, Philosophically, and Religiously Regarded*. By various writers, with an introduction by the Bishop of Oxford.

more influenced by philosophy than in our own country, Ihering long ago pointed out that the basis of property in jurisprudence is really "social acquiescence" and not, as Savigny had insisted, adverse possession of the individual ripened by prescription.

But both State and Society are conceptions which Englishmen have been slow to grasp; and, although Maitland traces some kind of recognition of "the publick" in eighteenth-century statutes, it is at best but a faint-hearted recognition. When the movement for the protection of commons arose about the middle of the last century, the advocates of the rights of the public found that what in the popular sense was the strength of their case was at law its weakness. They pleaded immemorial user by the general public of certain commons, only to be told by the judges in almost so many words that what is everybody's right is nobody's right, that the public is not a person and is incapable of rights.* A similar reluctance was exhibited towards the recognition of the formative influence of custom and social opinion in creating new law. Now the tendency is all the other way, and the Lord Chancellor's † insistence in his memorable address at Montreal on the legislative efficacy of social opinion comes on the heels of a perceptible change in the

* Cf. Buller, J., in *Fitch* v. *Rawlings*, 2 H. Bl. 393: "How that which may be claimed by all the inhabitants of England can be the subject of a custom I cannot conceive. Customs must be in their nature *confined* to *individuals* of a particular description, and what is common to all mankind can never be claimed as a custom." Cf. Jessel, M.R., in *Hammerton* v. *Honey*, 6 W. R. 603.

† Lord Haldane.

habits of mind of English judges,* indicating greater receptivity to current usage. There was at one time an equally strong presumption in the Courts against any kind of collective action, whether it were that of a trade union or a joint stock company or a Nonconformist chapel, and Stephen hardly exaggerated when he said that by the law of England every club was a conspiracy. So slow was English law to recognize that the will of all was an intrinsically different thing from the will of each. Yet it is law, as the instrument of political authority, which moulds political thought.

This is a digression, but a digression for which Lord Morley's challenging words are our excuse :

" There is no unkindness, and there is useful truth, especially under popular Governments, in pressing people to realize the bearings of the commonplace that time and mutations of political atmosphere are incessantly attaching a different significance to the same ideas and the same words. We are so apt to go on with our manful battles as if the flags and banners and vehement catchwords all stood for the old causes. . . . Now, if ever, what mistakes and confusion are likely to follow an ill use of political words, and of the ideas that words stand for! What would become of a lawyer in the Courts who argued his cases with the

* See for some notable examples of this, *Bechuanaland Exploration Co.* v. *London Trading Bank* (1898), 2 Q. B. 658 ; and the words of Lord Justice Vaughan Williams recently in *The Harrowing Steamship Co.* v. *Thomas & Sons* (The *Times*, March 15, 1913): " The Courts had modified the natural construction to make decisions accord with commercial practice and convenience which he had heard described as commercial equity."

looseness in point and language, the disregard of apt precedents, the slack concatenation of premises and conclusion, the readiness to take one authority for as good as another—which even the best of us so often find good enough for politics? Is there any other field where Bacon's hoary idols of Theatre, Tribe, Market-place, and Cave keep such contented house together?"

For this looseness of mind the study of history may do much, but the study of law will probably do even more. History is captivating to the mind, but her snare lies in this fact that when we read our own opinions into her she cannot contradict us. "She is," as Lord Morley remarks, "very convenient to the politician—a plausible parallel makes him feel surer of his ground." The historians themselves are often the worst of sinners in this respect, for they cannot resist the temptation to improve upon their material. In the composition of their forensic narratives the early writers of history, from Livy to Thucydides, made their characters say what "they ought to have said"—what was "appropriate to the occasion."* To the Athenian historian, despite all his pains to get at the facts and avoid old wives' tales, it seemed not illegitimate to make his speeches plausible when he could not make them credible. In so doing he was subjecting his material to canons of dramatic art; but is the modern philosopher any less fallible when he subjects it to the thesis and antithesis of the Dialectic? History, indeed, may enlarge the

* Thucydides: "Τὰ δέοντα μαλίστα."

mind of the statesman, but it will teach him very little that he cannot learn better in the rough and tumble of politics.

> "Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,
> Sich ein Character in dem Strom der Welt."

The strict historian sees too much of accident—Mommsen, Gardiner, and Stubbs have all emphasized it—to believe in teleological explanations of history. Stubbs was doubtful if history would make men wise, but he was sure it would make them sad. The truth is that man can never hope to divine the future by reading the past. Even Machiavelli and Thucydides, with all their insistence on the cyclical character of circumstances and their tenacious belief in history as the school of the statesman, have to account for an incalculable element which they would fain dismiss as *fortuna* or τύχη, and the *virtù* which is the Florentine's touchstone of a true statesman reduces itself to something very like a volatile opportunism. History may repeat itself—over long periods of time—but politics never does, for politics is an affair of immediate adaptation of means to ends, and the combinations of circumstances with which statesmen have to deal are never the same. The statesman who studied history to discover which way the political trade-winds blew, and who tried to shape his course by a *Tendenzkritik* of the main stream of human progress, might easily become a failure and would certainly be a prig. That is not to say that he will not learn—what, indeed, his own faith should have taught him—that chicanery,

bad faith, dishonest dealing, exact in the long run a terrible penalty, which, though he himself may not pay it, will have to be paid by those whom he serves. We may find admissions, however faint, of that truth in places where we should least expect to find them.* It is a wise conservatism that history seems to teach the statesman—the knowledge of a nation's temper, to adopt the words of Burke, and the judicious management of it. And so Lord Morley :

"How often do miscalculations in the statesman, like narrowness and blunder in the historian, spring from neglect of the pregnant and illuminating truth that deeper than men's opinions are the sentiment and circumstances by which opinion is predetermined? 'What it is important for us to know with respect to our own age, or every age, is not its peculiar opinions, but the complex elements of that moral feeling and character, in which as in their congenial soil opinions grow.' In these words you have a truth, abounding in enrichment, power, insight, and self-collection, for every patient student of mankind—such a student as in our better hours of the diviner mind it is the business of us all to try to be."

Man, he reminds us elsewhere, is "born intolerant." That is only another way of saying he is born prejudiced. The author of the essay on Compromise would assuredly be the last to subscribe to the sophistries of Burke as to the

* Cf. Bismarck, *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, ii. kap. 29 : "In den meisten Fallen ist eine offne und ehrliche Politik erfolgreicher."

fortifying offices of prejudice, but Lord Morley is none the less alive to the immense inertia with which the statesman has to reckon and to contend. Amid all the change we see around us there are, he reminds us, "some stupendous fixities of human things." The truth is forced upon every thoughtful student of history. Often enough a social revolution turns out to be little more than a kind of eccentricity in the orbit of national life, and nothing is more remarkable than the way in which after such crises nations "revert to type." Tocqueville remarked with perfect truth in his *Ancien Régime*, that the reason why the theories of the French Revolution commanded such a wide acceptance was that they were so plastic. Every European nation could put its own interpretation upon them. Each domestic revolution reverted to type. Viollet has shown in the case of France itself that the legal changes in the structure of society which endured most were those which innovated least. We see the same process of local adaptation of general conceptions in the transmission of political ideas. The nineteenth century was a great age of conscious imitation in the arts of government. One school, represented by Guizot in one generation and by Gneist in another, studied to naturalize the English Constitution on the Continent. The two-chamber system and the law and custom of Parliament were imitated in nearly every country in Europe, but in nearly every case it was possible to imitate them because it was possible to misunderstand them. In nearly every case they underwent a process of unconscious modification in the country of their

adoption. An intermediate generation—the generation of Tocqueville and Laboulaye—alarmed by the advent of democracy turned aside to study America as the country which, they fondly thought, had found in Federalism a middle term between Liberty and Democracy; but they saw with the eyes of Frenchmen and read in its constitutional restrictions the protection of individual "rights" where its founders had merely sought to protect the rights of States. Every nation has thus its own *Zeitgeist* which assimilates in its own way the ideas it borrows from elsewhere. This "time-spirit" is for ever transforming what it works upon. A people's power over an idea is limited by its own past. This lesson is written upon every page of Sorel, whose motto might almost have been "History is Character." And national character, like individual character, is, it may be remembered, formed as much by the "instincts immature, the purposes unsure" of the sub-liminal self as it is by the higher activity of the conscious self. Instinct, habit, suggestion, sentiment play their part as much as reason in the development of nations, and it is upon these non-rational guides that they are thrown back in the crises of their fate. In that sense the history of a nation, like that of an individual, is its destiny. Happy the statesman who has read it, for he will be able to meet his enemies in the gate.

Lord Morley asks—and does not answer—the question: Is there Progress? We all believe in Progress to-day, but do we achieve it? Whether at the moment we are achieving it, who shall say?

Have we, indeed, any clear conception of what it means? We are, as Anatole France reminds us, working upon the roaring loom of Time even as the weavers who produce the Gobelin tapestry—we work without seeing the pictures which we weave. But that in the long run there is a quickened social consciousness, a deeper appreciation of our mutual obligations, it is impossible for any intelligent student to doubt. Private morality—the code of honour which governs merchants and neighbours, husband and wife, parent and child, may change little from age to age; but what is quite certain is that public morality—the relations of class with class, of State with State—has enormously improved. Our penal law, our law of bankruptcy, our Poor Law, our law of master and servant, are infinitely more humane than they were. No one would dare to write to-day, as Burke in all honesty wrote a hundred years or so since, of the multitudes of poor wretches "inevitably doomed" by the laws of political economy to a life of misery and servitude. No political economist would venture to contend to-day, as Nassau Senior contended barely a half-century ago, that profits inexorably necessitate the fatigue of the eleventh hour of a working day. Our attitude to subject and to alien races is wholly different from what it was.* There are now few, if any, rightless persons in the eye of

* The conception that aliens, at least not of the Christian faith, can have any rights at all is a purely modern one. It was seriously argued in an English court at the end of the seventeenth century that "if a man do beat a pagan or an infidel . . . he may plead his being a pagan" in an action for damages (*Sandys* v. *The East India Company*, State Trials, x. 373).

the law.* Education is liberal, speculation is free. Nor has this development of public morality stopped at the frontiers of each nation. Nothing is more remarkable than the growth during the last fifty years of a real international morality quite independent of that purely diplomatic policy which, in Bismarck's phrase,† like "a fluid element" is always changing its specific gravity with the political temperature. The prohibition of the slave trade, the regulation of trades dangerous to life and health, the rights of neutrals, the duties of belligerents,‡ the ever-expanding system of private international law, the rules as to the acquisition of territory by occupation, all these might be cited as examples of a growing recognition of the fact that there are obligations which transcend the limits of States. In all this there is Progress.

It is not difficult to read between the lines of Lord Morley's stimulating essay that this is also his opinion. He is no mere *laudator temporis acti*. He sees around him "equity, candour, diligence, application, charity, disinterestedness for public ends, courage without presumption," and in a passage of noble eloquence he recites the tribute

* The recognition of the child, the "young person," and the married woman will at once occur as obvious examples. The effect, however, of the Infants' Protection Act, and of the Married Women's Property Act upon the liability of a married woman in tort, have been, in some directions, to confer privileges while assuming merely to grant rights.

† "Die internationale Politik ist ein flüssiges Element, das unter Umständen zeitweilig fest wird, aber bei Veränderungen der Atmosphäre in seinen ursprünglichen Aggregatzustand zurückfallt" (*Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, bd. ii. kap. 29, seite 287).

‡ The reader will not need to be reminded that this was written in 1914!

of Sophocles to the unconquerable mind of Man. His, indeed, is a message of hope and encouragement to the younger generation, and surely it is a matter for congratulation that almost the last, as he is one of the most illustrious, of the great writers of the Victorian Age should speak to us in accents of such resolute hopefulness. Sufficient if we say that as is the thought so is the expression—English as pure in its diction, as supple in its idiom, as anything that Lord Morley has given us—and we know no higher praise.

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